

# DRAMATICS

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An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XXII, No. 3

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Scene from the Christmas pageant, A CHILD IS BORN, presented by Thespian Troupe 124, Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon. The students from left to right are Vernon Atkisson, Beverly Small, Kay McDonnell, LaNelle Darrow. Director and Troupe Sponsor, Mrs. Melba D. Sparks.

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1949-50 SEASON

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By WILLARD J. FRIEDERICH

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By TOM CONROY

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from "Mr. X," including an innocent-looking chair which collapses when sat upon, and others equally as bizarre. Another fact which has been kept from Roscoe is that Betty's father is reputed to be the most terrible-tempered man in town, having been known to perform physical mayhem upon suitors for his daughter's hand. From this auspicious start, the play careens along with never a dull moment in its three fun-filled acts. There are several studio scenes — played in front of the curtain; only one simple living room set is required.

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# Mid-Century Speech Conference

NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY TO HOLD FIFTH NATIONAL CONVENTION IN CONJUNCTION WITH SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA AND AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION

Among the four day program of addresses, panel meetings, and discussion groups touching upon a wide variety of speech and theatre problems, seventeen discussion topics will be of special interest to all dramatics directors of secondary schools who will attend the Mid-Century Speech Conference — the annual convention of the Speech Association of America, the American Educational Theatre Association and the Fifth National Convention of The National Thespian Society. This conference will be held on December 27, 28, 29, 30 at the Hotels Commodore and Roosevelt, New York City.

The National Thespian Society will hold its Fifth National Convention in conjunction with the National Speech and Drama organizations. At their convention the members of The National Council will give a progress report of the growth of the society during the past five years; chairmen of all committees will present their reports with their recommendations; and Thespian Sponsors in key positions will lead discussions on the proposed new projects of the society for the next five years. On Friday afternoon, December 29, the society will sponsor a general session at which time a prominent person of the New York Theatre will speak. A special luncheon is also being planned in conjunction with Alpha Psi Omega and Delta Psi Omega Dramatic Fraternities for Saturday, December 30, at which time Mr. Paul Myers, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, and Department Editor, DRAMATICS Magazine, will be the principal speaker.

Of the 92 sectional meetings of the Speech Association of America, 11 of these meetings will have special appeal for all high school speech and drama teachers as they are of the secondary school level. They are as follows: *High*

## LUNCHEON

The joint luncheon of conference delegates who are members of Alpha Psi Omega National Collegiate Dramatic Fraternity, Delta Psi Omega Dramatic Fraternity, and The National Thespian Society will be held on December 30, at 12:15 P.M. Paul Myers, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, and Department Editor, DRAMATICS magazine, will speak on **THE THEATRE OF BROADWAY TODAY**. Reservations for this luncheon should be made at the Thespian information desk on the convention floor.

## FIFTH NAT'L CONVENTION NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY

December 28, 29, 1950

The following is the tentative program of the Fifth National Convention of the National Thespian Society scheduled for December 28, 29 and 30, at the Hotels Commodore and Roosevelt, New York City:

On Thursday morning, December 28, at 9:00 o'clock the Society will meet jointly with SAA, AETA, NUEA, at which time Miss Barbara Wellington, National Director, will be one of the key speakers. At 10:30 the National officers will give their reports as follows: MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 1945-50, Barbara Wellington, National Director; MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND EXPANSION, 1945-50, Blandford Jennings, Assistant National Director; FINANCIAL STATUS, 1945-50, Leon C. Miller, Executive Secretary-Treasurer; THESPIAN MEMBERSHIPS, Marion L. Stuart, Senior Councilor; THE ADVANCEMENT OF STANDARDS IN THE DRAMATICS ARTS, Jean E. Donahey, Senior Councilor; GUARDIANS OF THE SOCIETY, Dr. Paul F. Opp, Board of Trustees.

Friday morning, December 29, at 9:15 the following Committee Chairmen will report: CREDENTIALS, Jean E. Donahey; CONSTITUTION, Blandford Jennings; INITIATION CEREMONY, Jean E. Donahey; PUBLICATIONS, Thomas A. Morse; RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, Dina Rees Evans; NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS, Mary Ella Bovee; DRAMATICS MAGAZINE, Myrtle Paetz-nick; THESPIAN STUDENT MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS, Marion L. Stuart.

At 10:45 the following chairmen of the committees on New Projects will report: NEW PUBLICATIONS, 1950-51, Leon C. Miller; TEXT BOOK, Marion L. Stuart; SUMMER SCHOOL TRAINING PROGRAM, Blandford Jennings; QUALIFICATIONS FOR DRAMATIC ARTS DIRECTORS, Leon C. Miller; 16MM FILM ON HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE, Marion L. Underwood; FILMSTRIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL THEATRES, B. Davis Evans; TEACHERS' CERTIFICATION, Mabel Marie Ellefsen; ANNUITIES, Harry T. Leeper; CONFERENCES, Leon C. Miller.

At 2:15 P.M. a prominent person of the New York Theatre will deliver the principal address, and on Saturday, December 30, at 12:15 P.M. there will be a Joint Luncheon for delegates representing the National Thespian Society, Alpha Psi Omega Dramatic Fraternity and the Delta Psi Omega Dramatic Fraternity. Mr. Paul Myers, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, and Department Editor, DRAMATICS Magazine, will speak on **THE THEATRE OF BROADWAY TODAY**.

## CONVENTION SERVICE

If you are planning to attend our National Convention in New York on December 27-30, 1950, please take advantage of the Languld Convention Service, 17 Washington Place East, New York 3, New York. They offer the following services: advance purchase of theatre tickets; obtain tickets for television, radio broadcasts, and concerts; information about restaurants, night clubs, shopping, exhibits, museums, transportation, and sightseeing (reservations if requested). If, and when, you write to the Languld Service, be sure to say that you are a member of either The National Thespian Society, Speech Association of America, or the American Educational Theatre Association. All of these services will be given without charge to our members and their guests.

*School Radio Workshops, Producing a Television Show, Discussion in the High School, High School Forensics, The Place of Speech in Public School Education, Speech in the Junior High School, Senior High School Speech Courses. A demonstration of High School Teaching, Coordination of High School and College Training, Teacher Education for Elementary and Secondary School, and The Motion Picture as a Field of Study.*

Six of the 18 sectional meetings of the American Educational Theatre Association will command attention of high school teachers: *Children's Theatre, Children's Acting — a Demonstration, The High School Dramatics Course, Secondary School Acting — a Demonstration, The Teaching of Cinema, and Radio and Television.*

Seven general sessions are a part of the program — all composed of speakers who are nationally known and recognized as outstanding authorities in their fields; as, Frank M. Rarig, visiting Professor of Speech, University of Missouri; James H. McBurney, Dean of the School of Speech, Northwestern University; Willard Givens, Executive Secretary, National Education Association; Alexander Drummond, Cornell University; Dina Rees Evans, Heights High School, Cleveland Heights, Ohio; Winifred Ward, Children's Theatre of Evanston, Illinois; Barrett H. Clark; and Robert Edmund Jones. Several special luncheons are also on the agenda.

Two conducted tours are scheduled. On Wednesday, December 27, Leon V. Arnold, lecturer and former school principal, will conduct a trip to the United Nations, leaving Hotel Commodore by private motor coach at noon. Mr. Arnold will also conduct a tour of downtown Manhattan on Thursday and Friday afternoons, December 28 and 29.

Conference enrollment is expected to pass the 3,000 mark as New York City is one of the ideal convention sites with its wide range of theatre, radio, television, and night club entertainment. Its shopping centers, exhibits, museums and sightseeing will be additional drawing cards.



# A Look at Playwriting

By TOM CONROY

Although there are no definite rules for writing a play, there is a special demand for the study of technique in the writing of a play, and of the limitations in staging as well as the demands of the audience.

I can only tell how to write a play from my own experiences; how I go about writing a play. I begin a play in much the same way I do a short story, getting the idea from: some dramatic situation; some compelling character or contrast of characters; or some general truth about life. From one or more of these, I develop my story, then my characters and their dialogue.

Action which is motivated by conflict and passion, with the necessary characterization, is probably the prime essential of a play. The conflict should be more than just implied; it must be implicit in the action. In other words: "Show your conflict, not tell it."

When writing a play, do not overlook the importance of the audience. It is for them that you are writing the play. A play does not actually come alive until it pours itself out over the footlights, and becomes a part of the people seated in the audience. The most important factor of a play is the audience.

Now what makes an audience? Where do these good people come from? But most of all, why do they come to the theatre? Well, the reasons are numerous. Some people go out of boredom or curiosity. Some go because their friends go, and they don't want to be a social outcast. Many go because of a favorite actor's presence in a play. But first and last — people attend the theatre to be entertained.

Never do they go to enjoy the ideas of the dramatist. Sometimes, it happens, and if it does, all well and good. But when one considers the audience — a group of people with a variety of tastes, cultural backgrounds, and education, he has to stimulate them through the eye and ear; that is, grip their interest, hold their attention. Make them want to know what's happening next. Only after their curiosity is aroused does the playwright in the end appease them.

As I said, one must hit the audience in the eyes and ears. So therefore speech is important. It should above everything else be natural and in keeping with the character. Speech explains character.

So many of the plays being turned out by young playwrights the country over are weak in the dialogue department. Their speech is not natural and in keeping with their characters. To be familiar with the dialogue of the characters, the playwright must study people he meets in everyday life by listening to them talk, by keeping a notebook, by

writing down bits of speech. Shaw's *Pygmalion* illustrates this point.

As for myself I have always been afraid of techniques and formulas in creative work. But there is a constructional form which should be observed in mapping out a "good" play. This requires the proper selection of details, and then the proper arrangement of these details into scenes, then acts.

Regarding the details — those selected must be dramatic and enhance the value of the play.

In constructing a play, I build up the story first by acts, then return to each scene building it up, trying to make each scene grow out of the scene before, and likewise having each act grow out of the preceding act. This is the unfolding of the play.

There is a strong comparison with the short story and a play. Both begin in the middle of the situation, and move forward. Sometimes the short story begins at the end and "flash-backs" the story. This can also be done with the play. As I pointed out in my introduction, there are *really* no rules to the writing of a play, only those governed by common sense.

As in short story writing, there are many tricks employed in fine playwriting. How to build up suspense, how to get laughs, how to present variety of movement — these things involve a great deal of study. After one has studied the theatre as I have, maybe he'll draw the conclusion that I have: "It's not the rules everyone talks about that makes a play; it's more likely the construction of the play itself that really counts."

How can one get experience? My advice — train for acting with a little

## TOM CONROY

Tom Conroy is a young (22) Chicago playwright, who has written to date eight plays. His first play, *SORROW'S DELIGHT*, a one-act fantasy comedy, was produced by THE HULL HOUSE ART THEATRE June 2-3-4-5. Another one-act comedy, *MURDER STORY*, has been published in THE INLAND JOURNALIST and will be produced by many small groups in the Chicago area. Working under the tutelage of Maria Astrov-Lazereff at Chicago's Hull House, Tom's plays show great promise. Madame Lazereff was in the Moscow Art Theatre at the same time as Constantin Stanislavsky and Anton Chekov.

theatre group. Even if one is a poor actor, he will get to study the theatre, for he'll be a part of it. Do not go overboard on attending plays, or reading them to a great amount, but keep abreast of what is happening, for the theatre is changing. Many new and interesting developments are taking place in the theatre, even at this very moment.

Here are a few simple rules regarding playwriting:

1. The stuff best plays are made of is life itself. Get all your material from life.
2. A full-length play should run slightly less than two hours. The way they (I don't know who they are) figure is an hour and fifty minutes. Now this boils down to a half-hour for the first act, a half-hour for the second act, and twenty minutes for the short third. The other remaining time is divided ten minutes between each act. An estimated fifty typewritten pages should be about right for a full-length play.
3. As soon as the play is completed, GET IT COPYRIGHTED. Don't think somebody won't steal it. This game is overpopulated with literary parasites who simply thrive on the ideas of the younger writers.



Scene from *Lift With Mother* presented by Immaculata High School, Chicago, Ill.; directed by Anna Helen Reuter, sponsor, Troupe 1020.



# Using the P. A. System for Radio Instruction

By E. CLAYTON McCARTY

*Head, Speech and Drama Department, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas*

The radio is an extremely strong factor in the modern school — and for that matter, in all of modern living. That is self-evident, but look for a moment at the change wrought in just one section of the speech field. Not too long ago a public speaker was forced to depend upon the sheer power of his voice to reach the limits of his audience. To speak to an audience of five thousand was hard physical labor. The orator with his chanted sequences and his silver tongue was the product of such conditions. But now over the public address system we can talk to an audience limited only by the size of the auditoriums which hold the listeners — and in the intimate tones of conversation with our friends. And over the radio networks our words are heard throughout an entire nation.

This influence extends far beyond the one small example. Therefore, students should not come out of high school speech and drama classes without a good deal of training in radio.

## In the Public Interest

Fortunately for the schools, radio stations are required to devote a rather large slice of their time to programs "in the public interest." That phrase covers many types of programs sustained by the station without commercial sponsors. Many of these programs require much argument on the part of the stations in an attempt to convince the Federal Communications Commission that they are actually for the interests of the public. Program time given to a school, however, is rarely questioned by the licensing authority, and stations everywhere, therefore, will grant free time to any school able to maintain a program at a fair level of excellence. Here, then, is the performance assured for any worthwhile school group, the testing under fire that every teacher wants for his students.

Mortality among programs originated by school organizations is high, and few of them last very long. Several factors lie at the roots of this. The steady week-after-week grind of keeping a program on the air takes time and energy — something already stretched to the limit for many teachers. There are very few places to turn for radio scripts. Play publishers are slow to enter this new field. When our Trinity University Players undertook their programs it became necessary to develop our own script writers from our dramatic writing students. Now, even though we have

a backlog of a hundred good plays, we still feel the strain of finding a good script to fill that blank spot in our schedule. And the average high school does not have a dozen or more students with the technical ability to turn out acceptable plays once a week.

But one of the greatest causes of the death of high school radio programs is the lack of training facilities in the school. Green actors and announcers sent down to the stations will not make smooth programs. And when conscientious teachers feel they cannot train adequately, most of them will not even attempt to do a radio program. In consequence, free time on the radio goes begging everywhere, and with it goes a chance to prepare our students to meet life situations in the speech field.

## Expensive Equipment Not Needed

Too many young teachers have come away from their college training with the notion that a whole lot of expensive equipment is needed for teaching radio. Quite the contrary is true. Again, as in the case of recorded sound effects for the stage, the school's public address system supplies the need. Any student can be taught the basic techniques of radio with nothing more than the simplest form of a public address outfit.

A radio station and its control rooms and studios leave an impression of highly polished mystery, with complicated gadgets full of a confusion of buttons and knobs. Actually what one sees there is only a magnification of an ordinary public address amplifier and microphone and loud speaker. The basic principle is the same. Someone speaks into a microphone; the feeble current set up in that instrument is stepped up in the amplifier; its power is adjusted to the right level by the volume control — you have one on your radio at home; the voice now strengthened comes out through the loud speaker — sent also to a transmitter in the case of the radio station.

If we place the microphone in one room and the amplifier with its volume controls and loud speaker in another room, with a glass partition between, we have the counterpart of a radio studio and control room. A teacher with imagination can accomplish this arrangement in any number of ways. Of course we all want a specially built control room and a studio with special acoustic plaster and all the trimmings. But the lack of these should not stop us from setting up a good course in radio fundamentals.

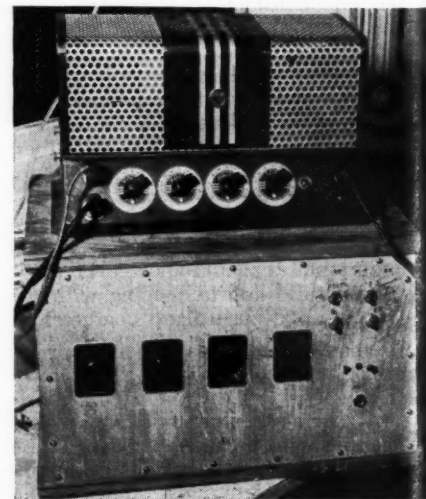
## School Studio Easily Built

A school room which has a cloak-room or a fairly large closet can be turned into a radio training laboratory with very little trouble. Have the school carpenter fit a glass panel into the door between them and place your microphone in the cloakroom and the amplifier and loud speaker in the classroom. Lacking this a teacher can put the microphone in the hall, especially if the classroom door has a glass upper section through which signals can be exchanged. If neither of these is available, set up some screens in the classroom to enclose the microphone. Student directors can then stand at the entrance to the screens to give their signals instead of waving their arms behind a plate glass window. If a little theatre, such as some high schools possess, is available, use the stage for a studio and the auditorium for a control room. The curtain can divide the two.

Such an arrangement, with microphone, amplifier, and speaker, will allow one to teach all the elementary tricks of microphone technique — fades, entrances and exits, perspectives, the balancing of voices, and the others. Radio speaking and radio drama need no more than this for a fairly adequate course.

Sound effects, for plays done with the simplified set-up described, must be manual rather than recorded. However, an arrangement of turntables duplicating the equipment of an average radio station can be made at very little additional expense. This will allow the teaching of elementary control room techniques and the problems connected with radio production. This will also allow the teacher to provide the background music and sound exactly as it will be in the radio station.

The control room of a radio station contains three basic pieces of equipment: the control console which performs the function of an amplifier and its volume



The Trinity University Players' first homemade amplifier.

**BETHANY COLLEGE, W. VA.  
DRAMA CLINIC, DECEMBER 9**

For the second consecutive year Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va., will hold its Drama Clinic for high school students of the tri-state area on December 9. Dr. George Hauptfehrer of the Music Department and Albert W. Bluem, Director of the Theatre, are in charge of the program.

The tentative program follows: presentation of an operetta; experimental arena productions; production of radio dramas over Station WWBN on campus; special session on television dramatic production.

controls, and two phonograph turntables, one to the left and one to the right of the operator. This can be duplicated easily in a simplified form in any school.

**Turntables Inexpensive**

The phonograph turntables you may buy already made up. However, single speed phonograph motors and turntables may be purchased for about six dollars apiece and mounted in a box. Any boy handy with tools can do this; the shop teacher can make the job more lasting. If you look at the picture of our Trinity University control room, you will notice that our motors and turntables are mounted in two old tables. Since we wanted to play the big sixteen-inch radio transcriptions as well as the ordinary phonograph records, we secured two-speed motors costing only a little more. The pick-up arms may be had, starting at six dollars, depending upon the quality you can afford. A student operator, sitting between the two turntables, is able then to play recorded sound effects on each simultaneously and mix them with his volume controls, or he may practice the disk jockey's routine, setting up a new record on one turntable while the other is playing.

Now the problem, of course, is to arrange equipment so that each instrument — turntables and microphones — has a separate volume control. The usual amplifier furnished with a public address system is built to use one or two microphones and one phonograph turntable. The Trinity University Players' first amplifier was of that type — see the picture showing the metal amplifier mounted on top of a wooden box. Notice in the photograph that it is a small amplifier, made to handle only one microphone and one turntable — the two cords plugged in at the left of the volume control panel. The controls, reading from left to right, are the volume control for the microphone, volume for the phonograph, master volume control, tone control, switch, and the plug on the right furnishes an outlet for one loud speaker. The box upon which the amplifier is mounted is an addition of our own to make the set more flexible.

In the wooden box are volume controls for two microphones and two phono-



Two homemade turntables attached to the amplifier.

graph turntables. After passing through these separate volume controls, the two microphone lines and the two turntable lines are joined to plug into the amplifier. This is a cheap way to adapt equipment already on hand. With this description and picture, any radio repair man, or shop teacher or student with some skill in radio, can make the control box. The cost should not exceed twenty dollars for material and labor. Made in our own shops, the control box pictured cost about eight dollars. If you have money to buy a new amplifier, one which already has built into it controls for two microphones and two turntables, it will do the job with a little more efficiency. Cost of one would run above fifty dollars.

**Radio Production**

This outfit will be flexible enough to teach all of the ordinary problems in radio production. One microphone can be used for a play cast and the other for announcer or manual sound effects. With this basic equipment a teacher can set up the conditions found in a radio station, with recorded programs, plays, newscasts, special events programs, live music, interviews — all separated by the

usual station breaks. With this also, ample rehearsal can be given to any program the school broadcasts from a local station, and under studio conditions.

The equipment has proved ample even for college radio instruction. With no more than this Trinity University Players developed a program which consists of from fifty-two to seventy half hour broadcasts over local stations and a circuit of radio stations over Texas which broadcast a half hour play each week from tape recordings made with this set-up. With good training on such equipment a student can step into a control operator's job in a small station with very little trouble.

To get full value from this simple radio set-up teachers ought to add a few extra items. A recorded sound effect library should be built up over a period of time, starting first with the records most used — rain, wind, car, traffic, birds to suggest open country, crickets to give the impression of night. A few music albums should be on hand. Several manual sounds will prove helpful — telephone bell, door bell, an old phone to dial. We still use the studio door for a door slam, even in our broadcasts from one of the downtown radio stations.



# Television: Techniques and Appreciation

## Article III: Settings for Television

By SI MILLS

Department Editor, *The Radio Program of the Month*

A trip backstage of the show *Holiday Hotel* is highly illuminating. The show is an excellent example of the ingenuity and talent of television's scenic designers.

What the audience sees is something like this: first, the outside portals of the hotel; then the lobby with its room clerk's desk, stairs going up to the next floor, and the huge checkerboard lobby floor. The entire scene is rather impressive-looking when seen through the camera's eye. That is why a trip backstage is highly illuminating. The tremendous looking portals are built so that they can be moved aside very easily and thereby allow the camera to "dolly" into the lobby. The stairs on the extreme right lead to nothingness. They are merely good-looking "props." The checkerboard floor is not black and white as seen on the screen, but is more aptly described as gray and white. The gray is the color of the studio floor (a sound proof material) and the white squares are painted on the gray floor so that the illusion is one of alternate black and white. The white, as is the case with most paints used in television, is washable. After each performance of the show which features tap dancing the paint is in pretty poor condition, badly scratched. That means that the floor has to be redecorated every week in order that the television camera shall not pick up the many unsightly blemishes. Here one has an example of the methods employed on one television show in order to achieve a highly presentable setting.

Settings in television can most be likened not to those of the movies or the modern theatre, but to booths of the classical miracle plays. In those days there was no such thing as a stage. Instead there was a succession of simple sets carried from town to town by the miracle players and arranged along the squares in which they played. As the actors moved from one set to the next with the progression of the play the audience followed along. Today that audience is the television camera.

The sets are arranged one after the other, usually in the shape of an oval. The center of the oval must be kept clear so that the cameras and sound equipment are not impeded. In one recent hour-long show thirteen different sets were used, which gave the cameras 180 feet of stage front on which to focus at various times. Of course this is rather elaborate and for the lesser shows fewer sets are built; but there must invariably

be borne in mind the idea that the center must be kept clear to allow for camera movement.

There has been some disagreement as to whether the new medium of television should recruit its set designers from Hollywood or Broadway. It may be thought that the likeness to the miracle play will mean that television is more closely related to the theatre. However, the searching eye of the camera requires that sets must be elaborate. Besides, the central set used in the theatre lends a kind of monotony that is anathema to TV. It is true that revolving stages are being used more frequently in both fields, but they are expensive affairs and so do not lend themselves too easily.

Movie sets are good looking but they have the disadvantage of being large and heavy and therefore out of place in television where there must be movement. Too, such sets take a long time to build and cannot be used over and over again. Hollywood is capable of building impressive scenery that steals the show (at least for a short while) from the actors. Video cannot afford this extra use of time. Minutes and seconds are expensive. Scenery must provide atmosphere without stealing the show. The artist who has gotten his basic train-

ing in designing for the stage is aware of this and so the theatrically-indocinated man is more adaptable to video. He is more capable of building within the financial and studio limitations of TV. However, there is this to be said for the Hollywood designer. He has the advantage of being trained to produce a set that will permit varied angles of vision, whereas in the theatre the audience is limited to a single head-on view. This varied angle business and the camera's searching eye make a big difference in how elaborate sets are.

It would be an enlightening experience to the viewer of TV shows, as it was to me, to go through the paint shops of a television studio for the first time. Having seen only black and white pictures, knowing that color television is still in the future for the most of us, I was taken aback by the varied colors in the shops. The use of colors in set painting has a dual purpose. For one thing the actor is more likely to turn in a dull performance when working in drab surroundings. There is a very definite psychological effect. For another thing pastel colors, which are almost invariably used, photograph better and produce better blends, richer pictures, and an absence of interference. Placing a pure black next to a pure white will yield interference in the form of "halos." As an example, a designer, wishing to shoot the string of lights of a Coney Island roller coaster, merely painted a succession of black and white dots close together on the backdrop. The result was a series of "halos" that gave the effect of a string of lights.

Television paint shops that look like "rainbows struck by lightning," use very



Ship scene for CBS-TV's production of *Outward Bound*.





Stagehand winds CBS-TV's gloccamorra, movable light effect machine used for train movement, which has effect of train moving through a tunnel.

little in the way of oil-base. Such paints take too long to dry, are inflammable, and add weight. In a case where the set may have as many as 50 coats of paint this can mean serious trouble. All of the difficulties are overcome by using pastel shades in casein paints, aniline derivatives (lake colors), or earth colors. Any of the three can be applied to a set in a single day because they take less than an hour to dry.

The American Broadcasting Company has been able to solve partially the all-important question of time in the painting of sets. They have converted a former set of riding stables near New York Central Park into an ultra-modern television facility. The exceptionally high ceilings allow for taller backdrops. Then by having cut a slot between two floors they have the added advantage of scenic painters working in the upper story being able to lower or raise at will the set they are painting. This eliminates the need for scaffolds or ladders, and it permits the painters to work more quickly since they have no need to leave the floor.

Walking through the section where scenery is painted one can see the way layout is made. An artist equipped with a scale-drawing of the proposed set draws the full-scale outline of what is required by using a pencil on the end of what looks like a blackboard pointer. Since the canvas on which he is working is spread out on the floor, he does not require any form of ladder. The drawing mounted on a wooden frame is taken to the painters where it is set over the slotted floor and colored.

Ordinarily in this method of operating the set is usable only once since it is hastily made and is flimsy. This is one of the reasons for television being so expensive.

The National Broadcasting Company has a good answer for the problem posed by such waste, in what is called "units." By using interlocking devices these "units" are held together in any number of combinations. The advantages of such constructions are that

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"I found 'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH' to be especially good for high school students to do. Its teen age appeal supplemented by an adult philosophy makes a good combination from both audience and the actor. It is a play, the interpretation of which is well within abilities of teen agers." . . . Ethel M. Hale, Director, Hackettstown High School, N. J.

"We thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing and producing 'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH,' and the local audience was enthusiastic about the play as an evening of good entertainment very well suited to the high school age." . . . Christine E. Lucas, Director, Senior High School, Uniontown, Pa.

"'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH' was a great success as this year's Senior Class production. Our audience enjoyed it tremendously and the cast was enthusiastic about the story and plot. For teen-agers, and even adults, I recommend this play as good entertainment." . . . Haig Arakelian, Drama Instructor, La Jolla Junior-Senior High School, La Jolla, Calif.

"Our Junior Class put on 'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH' and it was an outstanding success. It is certainly an ideal play for a high school cast." . . . Sylvia Stecher, Speech Director, Carthage High School, Mo.

## Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

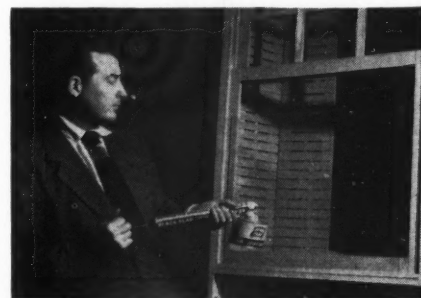
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waste is cut down by using the same set-pieces over and over and less time is required in addition to using more solid pieces. The main problem here is one of space. Where to store the "units" when they are not in use? That applies, too, to the "plugs" like hydrants, windows, doors, hitching posts, rocks, gravestones, etc., that help make up a complete set. In fact storage space is one of TV's big hurdles, a hurdle being overcome by an increase in studio size. Columbia Broadcasting has found partial solution by acquiring bigger quarters. Its new studios in New York have a total of 700,000 cubic feet.

This improvement in studio size has another very important effect. There is no assurance when scene "shooting" is scheduled for out-of-doors that the weather will permit good pictures. For this reason the "interior-exterior" has been developed. In a scene in the *The Storm* Margaret Sullivan was shown madly driving a car down the Merritt Parkway from Connecticut to New York. Actually she was sitting on a chair in the studio, an old Ford windshield and steering wheel in front of her. Water was thrown on the windshield by a spray gun; and a man in a squatting position worked the windshield wiper. Lights were thrown through a "gloccamorra"—studio slang for a wide-spoked wheel—to give the effect of passing cars.

There would seem to be little for a sound-effects department to do in a television operation. Although the sound-effects man does not play nearly as large a role on TV as he does on radio, he is very much in the picture. There is still important sound background to be provided—the chirping of crickets and the croaking of frogs in a night outdoor scene, for instance. Even such minor properties as doorbells and telephones must be operated. There are details like the slamming of doors (television sets are still too fragile to take a vigorous door slam), the firing of firearms (special permits are too difficult to obtain), and the creation of the body-blow sounds for fist-fighting actors, as in the recent "Studio One" production of *The Glass Key*.



John De Mott, CBS-TV sound effect director, works out new mist effect on glass sheeting.

# Stage Lighting for High School Theatres

By JOEL E. RUBIN

*Director of Lighting and Sound, Cain Park Theatre, Cleveland Heights, Ohio*

In this third article of the series we shall discuss mounting positions, instrument usage, and a simplified lighting layout.

The position to which striplights were relegated in our last discussion indicates that they have assumed secondary importance to the spotlight in our present lighting technology. Our attention then, in the presentation of the lighting layout, will be upon suitable numbers and types of spotlights, mounting possibilities for these instruments, and as we shall discuss in a future article, suitable methods of control.

It is of particular importance to grasp the fact that we are in the spotlight area; especially so because by far the great majority of little theatre stages have been equipped in the years of the striplight era. The architects, having had few theatres to design over the last decade, have not kept pace with present lighting methods, and as a result specify an oversupply of striplights and under-estimate the need for spotlight equipment.

Excellent examples of this exist in two theatres visited recently by the author, both erected in the past two years. One is a school building with its auditorium and stage, the other a theatre building for a community organization. The stage in the former was equipped with three sets of borderlights, and a set of footlights, all permanently hung and wired — at the expense of all but the most elementary spotlighting. In the community theatre building, so generous was the supply of striplights and ollivette floodlights, while spotlights were virtually neglected, that the theatre simply does not possess adequate equipment with which to light the front area of the stage which projects several feet beyond the curtain line. Both of these were installations which seemingly could have had the benefit of consultation from theatrical lighting experts. Apparently then, the basic decision in these matters must come from the group itself, demanding the right kind of installations.

The most important factor to keep in mind in planning new installations, or reconditioning old ones, is that the layout must be kept flexible. Each element of the architectural program must be considered from this viewpoint, and provision made for future expansion even though this might not be possible for many years. Provide, for instance, a variety of lighting positions, both in the auditorium and the stage, even though the purchase of equipment may have to wait. Provide for conduit passageways,

even though the cable cannot be purchased at once. Make provision for all the known elements of the present day theatrical technology, and then go further; try to foresee possibilities for future advancement. Make sure your architect gives you the ability to explore thoroughly the possibilities of your building.

One theatre designer has plans on his drawing board which call for a theatre so flexible that it may look like a new theatre every time the audience enters. The relative sizes and positions of the stage and seating area are variable, and the apparent size of the building interior can be changed at will. This is typical of the type of thinking that should be done for new installations. While this is not possible for the theatre plant already in existence, every attempt should be made to bring the plant as up to date as possible. Some of the factors involved in this procedure are discussed in the following paragraphs.

## The Lighting Layout

The basic light for the front areas of the stage must come from the auditorium. Attempting to illuminate these areas from behind the proscenium alone will result in lack of visibility and distortion of the lighted object. The front light should be able to cover adequately a third to one half of the stage acting area, and at the same time strike with a vertical angle of from thirty-five to forty-five degrees with the horizontal. Light

more horizontal than this may result in a flat, anti-plastic illumination, and may throw shadows of the actors onto the scenic background. Light at a steeper angle may result in deep facial shadows and resulting distortion.

Keeping these considerations in mind, it will be seen that the ideal location for these frontal units will, in general, be in the auditorium ceiling either through a series of ports or a false beam.

In old installations these locations may be impossible to achieve; a set of vertical pipes fastened to the auditorium walls at balcony front position often provide the answer. It is an easy matter to build a set of masking baffles around these pipes so that the audience does not see the spotlight units.

Other auditorium positions that prove of value are the projection booth (especially for follow spot work) or vertical ports in the auditorium walls in proscenium splay position for additional direction in lighting angle.

Units placed in any of these auditorium positions must be exceedingly controllable, and direct their light on the stage with little spill light on the audience or proscenium walls. For these reasons the ellipsoidal reflector spotlight is an obvious choice, second to it the plano-convex spot unit. Both are available in various sizes to suit the "throw"—i.e. the distance the light must travel before hitting its target. In most installations, the small ellipsoidal spotlight (which takes 250, 500, 750 watt lamps interchangeably) or the 1000-1500 watt plano-convex units will be excellent choices.

As we move onto stage from the auditorium positions, the footlight problem attracts our attention. This position has long been used because it seemingly wiped out shadows under the eyes cre-



A scene from the Yale University Theatre production of Gertrude Stein's *Yes, Is for a Very Young Man*. Setting by James Riley — Lighting by the author — Photograph by Albert J. H. Pullinger.



ated by the overhead lights. Actually however, in the creation of a good frontal angle, we have eliminated this problem and hence to a large extent the need for footlights.

In a few productions, notably revues and musicals, footlights are good for the chorus line; in dramatic shows they may well frontlight the curtain, otherwise they serve no other demanding cause. Hence while provision should be made for a footlight trough, units which will be used as footstrips should also be able to be utilized for other purposes. A good plan is to make the footlight sections interchangeable with borderlight and cyclorama striplights. For this reason striplight sections should be purchased which will accommodate both the PAR and R type lamps as well as the 25-75 watt household lamp.

The remainder of the basic lighting setup will come from the stage itself. Here again we shall be concerned primarily with the spotlight positioning.

Stage positions especially demand that ample room be left between the spotlight and any burnable object such as scenery or draperies. Safety codes in many states require ample room between spotlight and burnable object, or the use of asbestos between the two.

The majority of stage spotlights will probably be mounted in close proximity to the proscenium or false proscenium position. If no false proscenium exists the vertical light pipes can be permanently mounted at the sides of the proscenium opening, and the horizontal pipe rigged to ride directly behind the act curtain.

In the case of the false proscenium with its movable top (teaser) and sides (tormentors) provision must also be made to move the light battens similarly. This can be accomplished by the installation of vertical pipes directly into the tormentors themselves, and arrangement of the teaser lines and light batten lines so that both operate simultaneously.

Teaser spotlights serve the same purpose for the upstage areas as auditorium spotlights for the downstage areas. Note that while teaser mounted spotlights occupy a similar position to the old borderlight system, the direction of the light is actually quite different, the spotlight hitting much further upstage than the borderlight with its vertical angle.

The fresnel lens spotlight is an excellent unit for teaser use. It is efficient, and capable of both spot and flood focus positions; the spill light which it gives is not too disturbing for use in the upstage areas. The plano-convex unit is also acceptable but is far less efficient than the fresnel and hence requires a larger instrument. The six-inch fresnel unit (250, 500, or 750 watt interchangeable lamp) is an excellent choice for the small stage.

The tormentor or cross-lighting position adds an extremely plastic light. This light is directed at a ninety degree



Scene from *Meet Me In St. Louis*, with Ann Corrigan as "Tootie"; William Coll, "Lonnie", and Michael Morgan, "Grandpa." Presented by Troupe 257, Hazelton, Pa., Senior High School and directed by Miss Marian Brown.

angle to the basic lighting pattern, and thus provides a great deal of lighting contrast with resulting highlight and shadow. Ellipsoidal units, plano-convex spots and to some extent, fresnels, are suitable for use from tormentor mounts.

The contrast of front light against tormentor light can be seen in the accompanying photograph of a scene from Gertrude Stein's *Yes, Is for a Very Young Man*. The resulting distribution of light gives an added sense of plasticity and form to the figures.

On the small stage, the acting area may well be covered in terms of front light, with the auditorium spots and the teaser spots. On larger stages, it may be necessary to add additional light battens further upstage. Similarly the cross lighting positions can be carried further upstage with light towers, if such seems necessary.

In addition to the units thus far covered, there will be a need during the course of a play for certain specials. If some portion of the stage area demands emphasis, as an actor needs a dramatic light, separate control can be excised over a doorway or a prop. Here the plano-convex instrument, easy to set

and focus, can be of great help. Luckily the vast majority of these specials can be hung on some part of the stage rigging and so require no great effort to mount.

Other specials may be required to light offstage backings, serve as window motivation, or as cyclorama light. The ollivette or cyc floodlight will most often serve this purpose.

For non-dramatic production, such as band and glee club concerts, lectures and recitals, the footlight strips hung in border position will be the most efficient means of providing general illumination. Eventually the lighting equipment should include several of these units which can serve triply in footlight, borderlight and cyclorama strip positions.

In subsequent articles in this series, exact numbers of instruments for a particular production will be considered. In general, the small stage will use six to eight small ellipsoidal units, the same number of fresnel and plano-convex units, three or four borderlight sections, and a couple of ollivettes as basic equipment. This basic layout will serve to light, and light dramatically, the vast majority of little theatre and high school productions.



# The Styles of Scenery Design

## THE UNIT SET

By WILLARD J. FRIEDERICH

Head, Drama Department, Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio

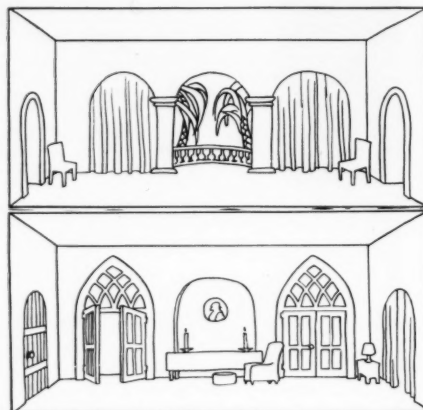
There are several types of unit settings, but all of them usually accomplish the same ends. They utilize the same basic set of scenery units which, with the addition of a minimum of more individualistic pieces, are arranged and rearranged to form an almost countless number of settings, different from one another to various degrees. Because of the re-use of stock pieces, the budget and labor requirements are greatly reduced. The shifting problems are lessened, because often the basic set is left untouched and only the minor pieces shifted; and, even when the basic units themselves are re-arranged, they remain on stage throughout and so eliminate the necessity of dragging large units on and off. This usually results in speedier and easier shifting and, at the same time, saves storage space offstage.

Since the amateur stage is often cursed with the same limitations—small budgets, a dearth of competent crews, scarcity of both stage and storage space, and lack of adequate shifting facilities—it is obvious that the unit set is often the answer to its problems. Plays of many scenes are often absolutely beyond the amateur group's capacity unless some simplified device like the unit set is found to overcome the obstacles and simultaneously provide not only interesting but useful settings.

The first kind of unit set uses a permanent arrangement of some of the scenery units, which usually form arches and similar large openings. These openings should account for at least fifty per cent of the wall space, or more if possible. The remaining movable pieces are then moved into, behind, or in front of these openings, and the other properties changed as required. Thus not only the general appearance of the set is changed, but the plan of the playing area as well. In the course of one play, for example, an archway may be used as it is, may be eliminated completely by covering with a tapestry or flat, may be filled with a window or door flat, may be made into a niche for a fireplace or cupboard, and finally may be backed by a sky or scenic drop to suggest the outdoors. Although the basic shape of the set is not changed, the director's action pattern is varied by this shifting around of exits and entrances and the main properties. Also, although the basic color of the set is unchanged, the tone of the succeeding scenes and their locales may be somewhat varied by changing the colors of the movable pieces and of the lighting. It must be mentioned, of course, that an adequate lighting system is of immeasurable assistance in indicat-

ing changes of mood from scene to scene. Because the unit set is usually painted a neutral or dark color, changes in the color of the lights and set dressing are the only means of securing variety. (See Figure 1)

The classic example of the use of this type of unit setting was Lee Simonson's design for O'Neill's *Marco Millions*. By merely filling an archway in the rear and one on either side, Simonson created



\*Figure 1: Two variations of a unit set of the type which employs permanent arches that are filled in with changeable scenery pieces.

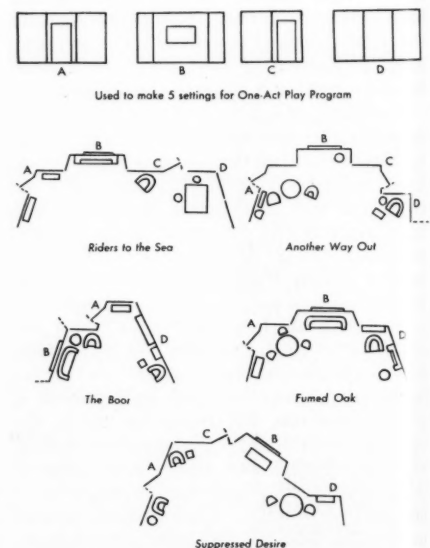
what appeared to be entirely different settings, even achieving the fete of indicating Marco's travels from one country to another.

This type of unit setting may be used for a single play and then struck, a different basic setting put up for the next play, and so on throughout the season. Where limitations make even this much change impossible, however, it is quite possible to have but one basic unit arrangement that is kept intact throughout the season and adapted from play to play. The designs used in the scenes of a single play are usually of the suggestive realistic style, because difficulty and necessity of speedy shifting do not allow time for completing too-detailed realistic settings. But when the same unit set is used from play to play, and particularly when there is no shifting called for during the plays, the designer has as much time as he wishes to make his adaptations more detailed. His results then may be quite realistic, if he so desires.

Here at Marietta College fire laws prevent us from striking the permanent unit set in the Little Theatre at any time during the year. It is designed with two large arches D.L. and U.L. and one D.R., two smaller doors U.R., and a platform

across the rear. By changing these openings and the steps leading to the platform and by redecorating each time, completely different and interpretative settings were created this year for the following dissimilar productions: *Yes, My Darling Daughter*, *Guest in the House*, *Shadow and Substance*, *The Trojan Women*, *The Farce of M. Pierre Patelin*, *Down in the Valley*, and *The Telephone*.

A second type of unit setting is similar to the first but involves more shifting. That is, similar basic scenery units are used throughout the play, but for the changes the *entire* set is struck and then rearranged. Thus, the window flat D.R. is moved U.C., the door D.L. is put in D.R., and so on, until every piece of scenery ends up in a position different from the one it occupied in the previous scene. A minimum of new pieces may be introduced from time to time, as well as a few pieces eliminated from a scene now and then; but each setting is still made up largely of the basic scenery units. The advantage of this more industrious plan is its capacity to change completely the shape of the floor plan, even the size of the playing area, for more variety. The color of the scenery, of course, must still remain the same throughout. The chief disadvantage is the complexity of shifting, which usually requires a longer time and a larger crew or more adequate shifting facilities. Storage space is still kept to a minimum. To make shifting easier, the flats are often hinged together into books or three-folds; this procedure allows the crews to break down the set into fewer sections than if they handled each flat singly. It also makes for a quicker reassembly of the units, although it may in some cases reduce the possibilities of variety in the designs. (See Figure 2)



\*Figure 2: Five variations of settings for a one-act play program at Marietta College. All sets were formed by the rearrangement of the four basic scenery units (A, B, C, D) illustrated at the top of the drawing; their positions in each setting are indicated by corresponding letters.

An outstanding example of a professional use of this type of unit set was Walter Hampden's production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, in which the same plain gray scenery pieces were used to portray the theatre, the bakery shop, the street scene, and the convent gardens.

A third type of unit set is the kind often termed "post and screen." The scenery units are usually as follows: a series of plain screens around eight feet high, hinged together in twos, threes or fours, which stand by themselves without bracing; a number of straight, four-sided pillars, usually from one to two feet square, also standing alone, and a selection of regulation platforms and step units. These items are rearranged quickly and easily, because they are both light and self-standing. Variety is far more possible than with the first type of unit set, because the floor plans may be as different in size and shape as they can be, without affecting the shifting at all. The screens are arranged to the shape of the floor plan, exactly as in the realistic box set except that there are no door and window flats. All openings are suggested by leaving alleyways between the screen sections. The pillars are then set up at each end of the screen sections to provide a terminal accent and give the set a more finished look and, also, to help to support the screens, of course. Platforms and step units may be placed anywhere, although usually they run offstage into the alleyway openings.

If the flats are around eight feet high, they must be set up in front of a regular curtain set. If they are full height, they may be set up like a regulation box set, providing the openings are properly backed, of course. Furniture is customarily kept to a minimum, since the steps and platforms may be used by the actors just as they are in the formalistic setting. Because the setting is definitely non-realistic in style, realistic furniture is usually avoided. Straight, simple pieces, such as benches and stools, are preferable. These are easily made and are commonly painted in flat, neutral tones, like the setting itself. Non-realistic geometric shapes, like three-dimensional cubes, may be used in lieu of tables, chests, and beds. (See Figure 3)

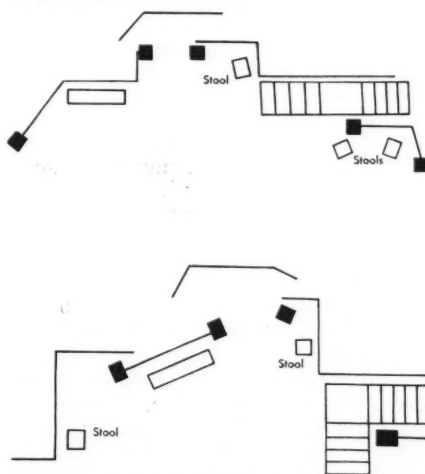
Although this third type of unit setting is clearly more formal in style than the two previously mentioned, it has sometimes been made more suggestively realistic by the addition of realistic set pieces and dressing. There have also been designers who cut door and window openings in the screens and added such realistic appendages as window drapes and door shutters. The results have been fairly dubious, however; and, if a more nearly realistic approach is desired, the designer would do better to use the second type of unit setting described before. With that type, he may easily be suggestively realistic without fear of anachronism. If he needs to simplify it more than indicated in this article, he



Two settings created from the same permanent unit setting. The top picture shows the artist's living room, made from a reconverted barn, in *Guest in the House*. Since there were no changes called for in the play, this setting was made as realistic as possible.

The lower picture is the setting for Euripides' *The Trojan Women*. Because this play was part of a double bill and changes were made from one play to the next, all settings had to be of suggestive realistic style. The Greek locale was suggested by six simple, self-standing columns, a small altar and Greek vase in the rear, and a few gold and black draperies.

may cut the height of his flats to less than regulation, keep his fillers in the door and window openings as light and simple as possible (using canvas door shutters instead of wood, for example), and reduce the furniture and set dressing to the barest essentials.



\*Figure 3: Two variations of the many arrangements possible in a "post and screen" set made up of one platform, two step units, and screens constructed of small panels which swing both ways on two-way hinges. Posts are indicated by the solid black squares.

The inference thus far has seemed to be that unit settings may be realistic, suggestively realistic, formalistic, or a combination of the latter two. They usually are just that, it is true; but at-

tention must be called to the fact that many imaginative unit settings can be — and sometimes are — done in other styles. The permanent elements of the unit setting may be stylized or theatrical in treatment, just as may the additional and movable pieces. For example, a large picture frame, with elaborate Victorian frame done in charcoal or bright paint, could be filled with backgrounds of obviously painted theatrical backdrops; or stylized black and white sketches. Painted eighteenth century door-arches might be filled with three-folds, forming a suggestion of a shallow alcove or corner of a room. These flats may be painted in gay colors, with furniture and openings painted right on in flat design. A couple of chairs or other real pieces of furniture of the period might be added for the actors. The result will be a charming, humorous combination of stylization and theatricalism, perfectly in key with such plays as *School for Scandal* or *Fashion*.

In short, the treatment and use of unit settings are entirely up to the designer and are limited only by his imagination. But, whatever ingenious combination and style he creates, he will still profit from the advantages of the unit setting. Anything that interprets the play but also reduces cost and labor or simplifies shifting and storage is well worth the effort.

\*NOTE Drawings reproduced from *Scenery Design for the Amateur Stage*, by W. J. Friederich and J. H. Fraser (N. Y., 1950) by special permission of The MacMillan Company.



## The Radio Program of the Month

By SI MILLS

446 East 20th St., New York, 9, New York

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1950-51 school year. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

### "HALLS OF IVY"

The National Broadcasting Company

When Ronald Colman and his wife Benita Hume came to the airlines in January of 1950 as Dr. and Mrs. William Todhunter Hall of Ivy College, it marked the first time that either of them was on a radio program of his (or her) own. True, the man who for so many years has been a matinee idol throughout the country hadn't been a complete stranger to radio, but he had always appeared as a guest. Radio should be thankful for this show. There has blossomed forth a new source of maturity and wit. By long stretches of the imagination, their program might be called domestic comedy—or even situation comedy. That sort of definition would suffice for those who are looking only for material at which to laugh. However, for the more astute listener, for the one who is very much aware of what is going on in the world, who wants opinions—either to agree with or disagree with—this is the show to which to listen.

That doesn't mean that Dr. Hall is a stuff-shirted educator or that he is the mouthpiece of a writer who wants the world to know how he feels about a variety of subjects. The programs have an abundance of humor. In fact the very title is humorous. When one hears the name "Hall of Ivy," he believes it means ivy-colored halls. He hardly thinks it refers to people named Hall who reside at a college named Ivy. It's a joke, son. A subtle play on words. And that subtlety is the keynote of the humor and thought throughout. There is no ribaldry, no obvious attempts at guffaws, no seeking of belly laughs. Here is a show of normally serious intention with occasional touches of satisfying humor. The changes of pace are good; they keep one full, but not bloated.

The script locale is the small town of Ivy and Ivy College. The school is co-educational, non-sectarian, and old; and its student body is a fair cross-section of the country's youthful students.

Dr. Hall is gentle, witty, wise, and scholarly. His wife Victoria is English, also witty, occasionally impetuous, and always understanding. Like every educational institution, Ivy College moves from crisis to crisis. The campus newspaper blasts the board—and recently blasted the United Nations. It was Dr. Hall who pointed out that although the newspaper had the freedom of criticism, that perhaps they should look a little deeper. Racial intolerance is dealt with firmly, but with understanding. All the college crises come to Dr. Hall's door-

step. He is no miracle worker. He sometimes loses his temper. But with Vicky's help, things work out.

As a result of that first program of the season, the one in which Dr. Hall so nobly defended the United Nations, many listeners contacted the broadcasting company for copies of the dialogue (proof that there are many interested listeners). The demand became so great that the National Broadcasting Company sent to these listeners copies of that portion of the script. The copy reads this way:

"As you know, the United Nations, which represent some 57 countries and some 1,700,000,000 people, was formed with the simple objectives of international cooperation and good will, which, by extension, means the eventual elimination of war.

"This, you claim, is idealistic to the point of fantasy. Perhaps it is. But I submit, it IS a start... it IS a beginning. Granted that it may not be the perfect and ultimate instrument for world security, it is still the greatest international step toward unity ever taken. Why are you selling it short?"

The student editor interrupts to say: "But look at the brawls they're getting into in the United Nations." "I do look at them, quite cheerfully," says Dr. Hall. "Politically, there is nothing healthier than violent argument and debate. It will be the ABSENCE of noisy discussion which should worry you. Then's when the shoddy deals are being made in the back room... May I point out that at this particular moment in history, when the paranoiac leaders of a foreign government are attempting to remake the world in its own ugly image, that to undermine the one group which is dedicated to underwriting the freedom and independence of small nations is to give aid and comfort to an aggressor?"

Says the student: "But don't you think it's too elaborate and complex an organization to be workable, doctor?" "It is complex and elaborate, without doubt," says Dr. Hall. "But, with the problems of 57 nations flung into the hopper, and the destinies of almost two billion people, it goes a little beyond the parliamentary procedure of a Boy Scout troop or the Ladies' Literary and Begonia Society. Gentlemen, I do not wish to belabor the subject. But as the president of a college who has seen too many splendid young men and women lay down their lives on the altar of diplomatic me-firstism, I welcome any attempt whatsoever to bring reason

and will into international argument. At this time the United Nations is that attempt. Therefore, I am in favor of it."

Dr. Hall may sound like a talkative old coot but he isn't. He is putting into words and in examples that everyone can understand the many things about which he ought to be told, and he is doing his talking in a way that is not dry-as-dust.

In another program, for instance, there was the problem of an endowment being offered to Ivy—an endowment of half a million dollars. Not exactly a problem, you say. What school would turn down that much money? The leaders of the organization would have to be plenty off the beam. But Dr. Hall is far from being "off the beam" and he was turning it down. You see, there was a condition to the endowment. The money could in no way be used to further the education of "certain racial groups." The conditions of that endowment were the same as other schools have actually encountered. Reading the newspapers in the past two years would disclose how frequently such conditions occur.

The person making the grant was the mother of the boy whose portrait had been painted from memory by a fellow who had spent a night in a foxhole with him, and is now a student at Ivy. The painting was a prize winner and was receiving a good deal of attention just as the mother was offering the grant. The story, without ever becoming maudlin, is contrived so that the mother—already informed that her grant is not acceptable under the terms she wants to impose—meets the artist who has learned more about her son in a few brief hours than she has in a lifetime. She is astounded to find that he is not white, that her son was much less bigoted, more human, than she.

The school gets the endowment, of course, without strings; but the important point is that the word "Negro" is never once used, although one knows what is meant. The anti-climax is so brief as to do a tidy job of supplying a logical conclusion without bringing a let-down to the listener. The acting throughout is better than just good; it is excellent. And the touches of lightness come at exactly the right times to supply comic relief without marring the idea that is being put across.

The entire production moves with a cat-like smoothness. It goes forward, crouches, leaps, and recovers with amazing rapidity and deftness. Undoubtedly a good deal of this finish is attributed to the polish and finish of its principal actor.

Mr. Colman has a career formula which has kept his name bright, and his career as an actor fresh, since his first film role in *The White Sister*. He believes in change of pace, doing the unpredictable for his next part. It was probably this process of thinking which led him to decide to embark on a regu-





Halls of Ivy script in the making is discussed by Nat Wolff, director, Mrs. Colman, Ronald Colman, and Don Quinn, the creator and writer. Quinn also writes the Fibber McGee and Molly show.

lar radio series of his own. The series was conceived and is written by Don Quinn, who also writes the "Fibber McGee and Molly" program (last month's choice for "Program of the Month").

Colman was born February 9 in Richmond, Surrey, England, a little quiet town on the edge of a little river. His father, Charles Colman, was a silk importer, and the only histrionic personage in the Colman line was a forbear celebrated in the 18th Century London theatre as George Colman.

Ronald was educated at Littlehampton, Sussex, England, at the Hadleigh School, and in South England. His early youth was marked by a keen love of sports, excelling in cricket, football and rowing; an ambition to become an engineer; an aptitude for mathematics and the classics; a failing in history; an excessive shyness of girls; and a passion for the works of Robert Louis Stevenson.

The young Colman's only venture into the theatrical field was his professional appearance at the age of 17 when he entertained as a banjo player at a Masonic smoker.

He served in the first World War as a member of Kitchener's "Contemptibles" and saw action in the great battle of Ypres, France. He was disabled at Messines and, when the war finally ended, endured the bitter post-war trials of readjustment which all veterans experienced. During this period he tried all kinds of jobs, eventually interesting himself in the theatre as a career. His first stage work was a part in a dramatic sketch of Rabindranath Tagore, the East Indian poet, which toured England as a feature of the varieties.

Soon he was doing more important things in the theatre followed by occasional ventures into motion pictures. With amusement, Colman now likes to relate that his first motion picture appearance was in a two-reel comedy which, "thank heaven," he says, "was never released."

Restive and dissatisfied with his progress he decided in 1920 to come to America. Landing in New York fortified with \$57.00 in cash, three clean collars and two letters of introduction, he rented a small room in Brooklyn and subways the long journey to Manhattan in his daily haunting of the agencies and production offices.

He made his American stage debut playing three walk-on parts in a play called *The Dauntless Three*, starring Robert Warwick. In all three parts he wore beards of different sizes and hues. There followed nearly two years of extra work and small parts—when he got them. And when life looked gloomiest and a bench in Central Park seemed hardest, Colman got his first break.

He was given an important supporting role in the Shubert production of *La Tendresse*, starring Ruth Chatterton and Henry Miller, and was discovered in this by Henry King, screen director who gave him the leading male role opposite Lillian Gish in *The White Sister*. And that was the making of Ronald Colman.

It is interesting—and ironic—to note that in 1921 Colman appeared in Los Angeles in the road company of *East is West*, but at that time the movie studios did not think him "a good type."

Colman was an instant hit in *The White Sister* and was immediately starred in *Romola*. There followed a long list of pictures unmatched by any other motion picture star in history—all of them "A" productions, many of them milestones in filmdom.

On September 30, 1938, Ronald Colman married Benita Hume, beautiful English actress, at Santa Barbara, California. Since their marriage they have lived in an English country house, back in the hills of Beverly Hills.

Although he has made only one picture a year for 11 years, Colman has kept very active through several strong interests. Periodic appearances on the radio have established him as a radio

#### EVALUATION OF ASSEMBLY PROGRAMS

Thespian sponsors who plan assembly programs may find the following evaluation helpful. This survey project was conducted in the Benton Harbor Senior High School, Benton Harbor, Michigan, by the Public Speaking class of Margaret L. Meyn, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 455.

##### Preference Ratings of Types of Programs

1. Pep Meetings
2. Outside Speakers
3. Music
4. Audio-Visual
5. Dramatizations
6. Debates on timely questions
7. Radio programs
8. Quiz programs
9. Panel discussions
10. Demonstrations of classwork
11. Verse choir
12. Home and family living
13. Oratory
14. Forums

dramatic star, ranking as high as his picture standing.

Ronald Colman has come a long way since his first venture onto the stage with his banjo. Now he is an accomplished star of both screen and radio. In the latter field he shall be remembered not only for his portrayals of Dr. Hall, but for his contribution to the maturity and thought to a modern facility. This is hardly the series to be missed. (Since this program is heard via transcription on 158 different stations of the network, it is impossible to tell the exact time it reaches your local station. It is suggested that you watch your newspaper for the day and hour.)

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## THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library,  
New York 18, New York

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Requests should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Recent theatregoing has caused one to feel that the current stage should be very proud of its leading ladies but not of its dramatists. In almost all of the recent openings, it has been the leading lady who makes the evening seem worth-while. The most glaring instance of this condition is *Daphne Laureola* in which Dame Edith Evans is giving one of the most glowing performances we have witnessed in recent years. Dame Edith is the great English actress who, with the Old Vic Theatre Company, has played a wider range of roles than most actresses encompass in an entire career. Theatregoers on this side of the Atlantic have been privileged to see her in only four parts on the stage. Some of you may have had a look at her in the film *Dolwyn*. Her last stage appearance before us was as the Nurse in the Katharine Cornell revival of *Romeo and Juliet*.

*Daphne Laureola* is the work of the Glasgow physician-playwright, James Bridie. It was a resounding success when presented in London. Mr. Bridie is known to us for his *A Sleeping Clergyman*, which the Theatre Guild struggled with about fifteen years ago; *The Black Eye*, ambitiously presented by the Brattleboro Theatre during their stock season in Brooklyn; and for *Tobias and the Angel*, which was offered by the Federal Theatre Project. Not one of these plays has been a commercial success, but they have awakened an interest and a curiosity in Mr. Bridie. One has the feeling that he does have something to communicate and that the theatre is his medium, but one feels unsatisfied. The plays do not seem complete. As one leaves the theatre, one feels that Mr. Bridie has a great deal more locked in his mind.

*Daphne Laureola* is not as much enigmatic as it is unresolved. In the case of T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, one feels that everything the dramatist is saying is not being immediately comprehended, but that further thought and another seeing of the play will reveal greater meaning. After *Daphne Laureola* I felt that, while I may not have understood every inflection of Mr. Bridie's text, I did grasp all of his meaning and it is not enough to give his play importance.

The first encounter with Lady Pitts (played by Edith Evans) is in a rather sordid Soho restaurant. As she becomes increasingly inebriated, the Lady enters more and more into the lives of the other diners, who represent a very implausible cross-section of modern society. Carried away by the festivity, Lady Pitts invites them all to tea at her country

home in Hampstead. Oddly enough, in the second act, all of them do turn up for the tea. During this act, one meets Lady Pitts' invalid husband and begins to understand some of the tensions of her life. In this act, abetted by the playing of Cecil Parker as Sir Joseph Pitts, the play seems at its best. You haven't heard anything of coincidence as yet! In the final act—set again in the Soho eating place—all of the same diners appear again plus Lady Pitts, who is a regenerated woman. Sir Joseph has died and she has married her chauffeur.

This summary of the plot does, indeed, sound rather ridiculous. *Daphne Laureola* is told, however, in Mr. Bridie's words and through the artistry of Dame Edith Evans. One cannot repeat too often how great is this artistry. Her refined inebriation in the opening scene of the play, the gracious poise and refinement of the second act, and her triumph at the finale reveal finely graded facets of Lady Pitts. Let us hope that ere long we are afforded an opportunity to see Dame Edith in one of her great roles.

Another first lady of the British theatre is playing hereabouts in a London success. Flora Robson is appearing in a rather good play, *Black Chiffon*, by Lesley Storm. As I write, the play is closed but will again be inviting audiences in about two weeks. It was necessary for Miss Robson to undergo surgery. As unpleasant as this was for her, it came at a very critical time for *Black Chiffon*. After winning mixed reviews from the first-night critics, the play was just beginning to catch on at the box office. Let us hope that the break in the run will not cause patronage to drop away.

The action of *Black Chiffon* is set in the very pleasant drawing-room of the Christies' home on the Chelsea Embankment, London. The Christies are a very comfortably established family subject to the stresses which beset all families but with all of the necessities and a goodly portion of the luxuries of life. Alicia Christie, the mother of the family, is guilty, however, of shoplifting from a department store. The play explores the underlying strains of Alicia's seemingly placid life which have caused her to take the item of lady's clothing referred to in the title of the play.

The total effect is a very sensitive probing into an entire segment of current life. The inner problems of Alicia Christie are shared by every one of us to a greater or a lesser degree. It is not evinced in shoplifting in all cases. It underlies many cases of alcoholism, of mental illness, of all kinds of delin-

quency. In the wider sense it is a contributing cause of war, of labor unrest, of destruction. Miss Storm's theme is a powerful one and she has treated it magnificently. One never loses interest in the Christies. They are genuine people who involve your sympathy. It is only after later reflection that the greater implications of the play become vivid. *Black Chiffon* is, I feel, the best play to have come along during the current season.

Another of the theatre's leading ladies is currently playing in a work that does not afford her enough opportunity. Celeste Holm has been a favorite with this writer even before she won complete favor in *Oklahoma!* All of us loved her as Ado Annie in this work—the girl who "can't say No." My enthusiasm for Celeste Holm goes back to the initial production of *The Time of Your Life*, and from there through *Papa Is All* and *The Damask Cheek*. When her Ado Annie burst upon the town, I was in the disgusting position of being able to say "I told you so" (and I fear I did).

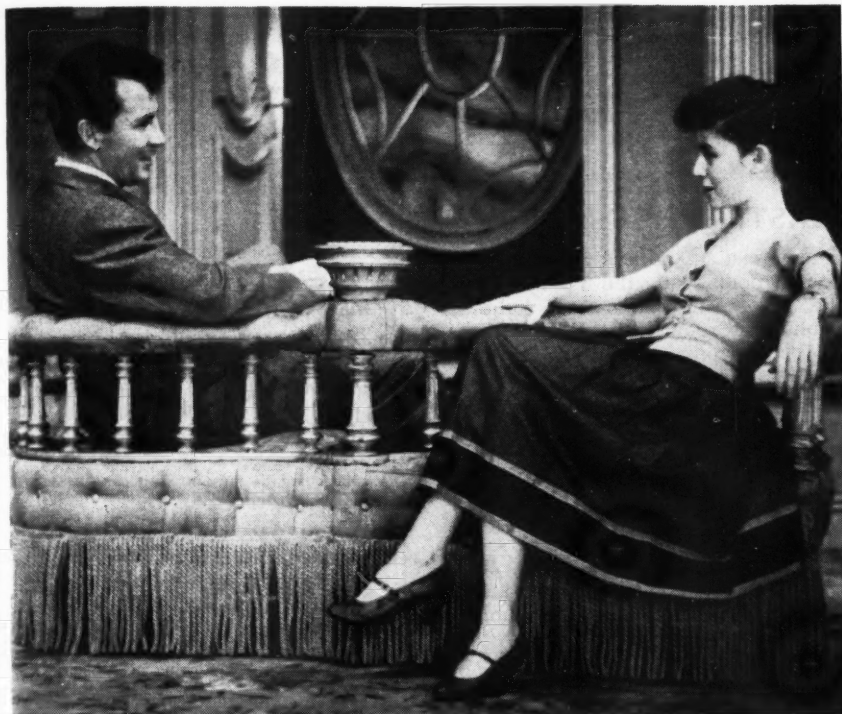
Most of us have seen Miss Holm in her post-*Oklahoma!* success, *Bloomer Girl*. All but a few of us must have seen her in the films *Gentlemen's Agreement*, *The Snake Pit* and *Come to the Stable*. I should like to add, parenthetically, that just a few days ago I saw another film in which she appears. This is the soon-to-be-released *All About Eve*. It is more than a good film—it is a film about the theatre. I shall, however, leave fuller description of it to my colleague on the neighboring pages of DRAMATICS.

*Affairs of State* is the play in which Miss Holm has returned from the studios of the West Coast. It is the work of Louis Verneuil and is, I believe, the first work of this author to reach us directly. Mr. Verneuil was for long one of the top dramatists of the Parisian theatre and his works were written in French. Some of them reached us in translation, but *Affairs of State* was written in English for Miss Holm to play in the American theatre. In spite of this, the play seems very like a transplanted French bedroom farce.

The locale of the play is the suburbs of our nation's capital. The people of the play are those who revolve in very high government circles. The loudest laugh occurs when Philip Russell (played by Reginald Owen) dials a telephone number, pauses and begins his conversation with: "Hello, Harry . . . yes . . . How's Bess . . . good . . . yes . . . and Margaret?" Philip Russell, you understand, is a very important personage. There is much in the character which leads one to believe that our elder statesman, Bernard Baruch, might have served as the model.

The plot of *Affairs of State* uncovers the maneuverings (political and amatory) of the people who might congregate in the drawing-room of the United States' Secretary of State. They are





Cameron Mitchell, a Vermont writer, visits Natchez, Miss., belle, Pat Crowley, in this cozy scene from the new Owen Crump comedy, *Southern Exposure*, which Margo Jones staged at the Biltmore Theatre.

amusing people, their talk is polished and witty, their manners are charming. The play is just that—witty and charming—but very little more. An excellent cast under the direction of the author holds an audience pleasantly amused.

One of the bitterest disappointments in recent theatregoing was *Southern Exposure*. Many of us have been watching with tremendous admiration the work carried on in Dallas by Margo Jones. Beginning three years ago with Theatre '47, Miss Jones will soon inaugurate Theatre '50. It is the custom in Dallas to celebrate each New Year's Eve by rechristening the company which Miss Jones manages in the Gulf Oil Playhouse.

One of Theatre '49's triumphs was Owen Crump's *Southern Exposure*. Miss Jones and two of her associates, Manning Gurian and Ted Adoue, decided to show this play to New York audiences. Many of us who are not able to get Dallas-way had been eager to see one of the plays performed in New York. It had been expected that the meeting of a Dallas success with a New York audience would be a very pleasant occasion. I am forced to admit—and very dejectedly—that it has not proved so. *Southern Exposure* just doesn't stand up in our Northern clime. Upon the stage of the Biltmore Theatre, it seems very amateurish.

Mr. Crump has taken as the springboard for his comedy the apocryphal quotation: "We've got three industries in Natchez: Cotton, Oil and the Pilgrimage." The action is set in the ante-

bellum manse of Miss Penelope Mayweather during the Natchez Pilgrimage. John Salguod, a writer for *LIFE*, insinuates himself into Penelope's home as a means of uncovering some unknown facts about the South for his readers. From there on the plot is as hackneyed and unfunny as one can imagine.

In fairness to Miss Jones, let us state that she has presented at her theatre the plays of Tennessee Williams, William Inge (author of last season's *Come Back, Little Sheba*) as well as Shakespeare and Moliere. *Southern Exposure*, though a Dallas hit, is not from the top-drawer of the drama presented there. Let us hope that in a very short time Miss Jones will bring us another Dallas hit and one that we can express greater enthusiasm over.

Just recently, one of the most brilliant of the season's openings took place. This was the new Irving Berlin musical, with a book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, *Call Me Madam*. In this production, the indestructible Ethel Merman plays a character based upon our Minister to Luxemburg, Mrs. Pearl Mesta. It has not been my fortune to have tickets for one of the early productions so my review will have to wait until a later issue. I did attend a neighboring theatre the same night, and was lucky enough to witness the festivities the premiere inspired. It was one of the great nights of the theatre and, therefore, I report it to you here.

Great crowds filled the street all around the theatre before and after the

performance. As the large limousines rolled up, the crowds near the curb would peep inside and announce to those in the back who the occupants were. A listing of the names would include representatives of all artistic, political and social life of the country. It was thrilling to hear the public cheer loudly for Judy Garland, and it must have been most reassuring for her.

Long after the performance was concluded, crowds stood about in front of the theatre discussing the event and comparing notes. Some of the talk centered about the show and Miss Merman, Irving Berlin, the merits or demerits of the book, the appearance of Paul Lukas in a musical. Most of the conversation centered about the excitement of the evening. We talked with total strangers. Somehow there was a homogeneity in the crowd . . . a common exhilaration. In the middle of the mob stood Beatrice Lillie, one of the greatest of the musical stage. Miss Lillie was rubbernecking as avidly as the rest of us. It was a great night!

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# SCREEN

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL  
Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,  
Los Angeles, California

This is the third of a series of seven articles on some of the less familiar phases of motion picture production.

## OF ART AND PLASTER

The first two articles in this series described the groundbreaking work of the Story and Research departments in major motion picture studios. When the story has been purchased and researched, the Art Department goes into action.

As I entered the building that houses the art staff of 20th Century-Fox I read the bronze plaque that credits Joseph Urban with the design of the structure, a building completed several years ago when Urban was one of America's leading designers for the legitimate stage. Just inside the entry, a glass wall behind the reception desk offered a view of tropical plants reaching upward from a sunlit terrace. While I waited a man stepped into the room and went to the phone. I heard him warn someone to check carefully the action of the bloopers... the walls of that ship are Masonite... only material we could use because of the weight.

Bloopers? Ship? Masonite? Perhaps this was no longer the Art Department. Mechanical effects, perhaps? Construction? The conversation on the phone ended. Then—"This is Mr. Lyle Wheeler, Supervising Art Director." I had come to the right place.

The Art Department's work goes beyond sketches and plans. In Mr. Wheeler's office I learned about the bloopers—mechanical devices with automatic valves that release large quantities of water and spray to simulate waves. The ship in question was playing the title role in the *U.S.S. Teakettle*, a new picture about a destroyer-type vessel that was used for experimentation with a new kind of engine. The picture was well along in production, but the Art Department was still on the job, watching over a counterfeit ship that only a few weeks before had been a penciled sketch on an artist's drawing board.

Right hand to Mr. Wheeler is Joseph C. Wright, his Executive Assistant. Under these two work a staff of eighty skilled employees: 40 draftsmen; 10 art directors; 5 assistant art directors; 5 model-makers; 5 sketch artists; secretaries, blue-print men, and stock-men; and two staff members who serve in a liaison capacity between Art and Research. The Art Department does more work with the Research staff than does any of the other departments. Mr. Wheeler confessed that the only complaint his staff can make is that the Research Department is too far away.

Most of the Art staff have a background of architecture, though a sketch artist may have had his earlier experience

in commercial art. There were two long drafting rooms with the familiar high tables, stools, and fluorescent lighting. The blueprint room was active, with the smell of ammonia in the air as prints came through the drier. Fifteen copies of each drawing and plan go to as many different departments.

In still another room, giants bent over a score of settings—the palace set for *David and Bathsheba*; a luxurious New York night club; a New England inn. The giants were the model-makers, the sets accurate forecasts of scenes yet to be constructed or already completed. Mr. Wheeler picked up an unfamiliar device and placed it vertically within the tiny replica of the palace.

"Look through here."

Through the finder of the periscopic viewer I saw exactly what the camera would see—a long expanse of stone flooring, flanked by towering pillars, leading through an arched opening to an impressive flight of steps. It seemed that at any moment David might stride into sight: a silent token of the importance of these models to the art men, the directors, and the cameramen.

Walls that were to be constructed as "wild"—that is, removable to allow for free camera movement into the playing areas—bore a red stripe; these could be lifted from the model to simulate actual set operations. Models of more or less permanent sets on the lot occupied long rows of shelves; before a used set is put to work on a succeeding job, the necessary revamping is tried out in miniature and possible errors avoided without the risks of delay and added expense.

Lyle Wheeler himself has two prized Academy Awards to his credit: *Gone With the Wind*, designed while he was with Selznick; and *Anna and the King of Siam*, a 20th film. He's justly proud of his staff. One art director and an assistant are assigned to each picture; they follow the progress of production from the first sketches through to the end of shooting. Each director has his own research library and office. And each is, in his own right, an artist.

The Fox Hills Studio acreage stretches from Pico Boulevard on the south to Santa Monica Boulevard on the north, bridging Olympic about midway with an overhead pass. The rolling grounds are flanked by gently sloping hills, and beyond the hills are mountains. The three boulevards are heavily traveled arteries between downtown Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean; yet the elevation and ex-

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panse of the lot isolate the visitor from the sights and sounds of the city. Here, lying beyond the huge sound stages — where sets are erected and struck in regular succession — are the more permanent products of the Art Department's imagination and skill.

Here are stored in rows of racks, the thousands of inventoried set-pieces that can be called back into service by the Art men and rejuvenated on order: old iron elevator cages; scores of fireplaces and mantelpieces; stone and brick wall sections; staircases and balustrades; the facades of buildings.

Suddenly, the road makes a sharp turn. You are no longer on the lot, but in a small Midwestern town. There are the square, the courthouse, the bank, the rows of trees, the white porches. The buildings are weathered, but the lawns are bright green. It is Fall and the air is clear. A man appears from around a corner and then disappears into a repair shop. There are the sounds of men and machines, so you follow curiously. Then you see that a machine shop has been set up, here in this village that has only a face; studio workers are going about their day's work. You turn your back on them — the town returns.

You drive on, and at every other turn you find yourself transported to a new environment. You think of the Magic Carpet. Here is a town of The Old West; only the imprint of tire treads in the dirt street betray the year. . . . Here are the sidewalks of *Little Old New York*; nearby are the streets of London; around the corner is the large frame house of the Gilbreth family in *Cheaper By the Dozen*. . . . You notice a square pocket in the ground, and running from it a dozen heavy conduits that go immediately underground: cables required to carry the electrical load required in motion picture production. And stretching over a large area of a mock city, parallel wires designed to support the hundreds of yards of black cloth with which the town can be canopied for night scenes, shot during the daylight hours.

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Lyle Wheeler, Supervising Art Director at 20th Century-Fox Studio.

Studio heads have found it impractical to use each other's temporary sets, although such a mutual exchange was tried during the last war. Sudden alterations in production plans at a studio frequently required the use of a setting occupied at the time by a visiting outfit; inefficiency and greater expense was the result.

But out here, away from the sound stages, the story is different. 20th regularly makes available its permanent sites to other studios, as do the other majors. Such sites are the many street scenes. Such, too, is the huge artificial "lake," dry between productions, where two massive Spanish galleons are docked; in the distance is New York and, not far from it, the Italian town built for *A Bell for Adano*. Beyond, in another direction, is a massive sky drop, fronted by a shallow basin that might occupy half a football field. Here many scenes at sea are shot, with large models of ships afloat on water that is agitated by machines at the basin's edge. On a sunny day the artificial sky reflects almost perfectly the blue of the limitless original beyond and above it. A ten-deck scaffolding on steel tracks moves easily across its face for a new paint job on each new picture.

Also available on lease to other studios are the collection of old automobiles, the airplanes, a submarine. 20th Century-Fox, in addition to having what is probably the best New York section, has two complete railway stations—one town and one city—equipped with modern engine and cars. Each station has appeared in countless films. But when Art Director Wheeler needs the streets of St. Louis, he applies to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; that MGM exterior has been used in four different pictures released by 20th.

Most attractive of all the exteriors is the village of Lourdes. Its creation for *The Song of Bernadette* is a story in itself. Arrangements had been completed for location work in an ideal village of

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Quebec, when the war with its transportation problems forced abandonment of the plan. A setting would have to be built at home. After months of preparation and hard work, on the slopes of Fox Hills arose the town of Lourdes: the winding streets, the village fountain, the old church, the little houses, the home of Bernadette, the river, the old mill, the grotto.

Trees sprang up overnight, transplanted full-grown. A large basin released water that rushed through sluices past the mill, winding by the grotto and around the bend, where, from a second basin, it was pumped back to its starting place—to return on its 500-foot course. It was a three-speed river: careful engineering allowed an imitation of the changing flow during the three seasons of the year.

The war drastically affected the availability of standard materials. But Paramount and 20th discovered at about the same time a large stock of used lumber on Terminal Island. Plaster was still unrestricted. Bent and rusted nails could be salvaged from the secondhand lumber and old scenery across the lot. A nail-straightener was constructed and put to work. And out of plaster and used lumber sprang the little French village.

I looked beyond the ancient roof-tops and was shocked to see telephone poles and wires that obviously served the studio. My host casually explained that, during the shooting of the picture, a cut-out mountain was constructed to conceal the intruders.

The spell of the village was strong. As we walked up the winding street there was a hush over the old buildings. We stood in front of the picturesque church.

"Plaster and old lumber," said my host.

"All of it?"

"All of it."

I walked slowly to the stone wall and cautiously rapped it. Hollow. My host smiled and indicated the iron railing. I tapped it. Wood.

The illusion was hard to shake. The church was beautifully proportioned and inspiring against the sky. We turned in at the gate and walked up the stone steps to heavy oak doors. Was that chanting beyond the walls? The doors swung slowly open at our touch. . . . Nothing but scaffolding, dust, and, beyond the bare supporting framework, the open sky.

Yet as we turned back to the quiet street, the spell returned. This, for a moment, was Lourdes. The charm of this hollow shell was a tribute to an artist's vision, a symbol of his skill.



Scene from *The Traitor*, as produced by the Players' Club and Thespian Troupe 946.

## THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK  
Director of Dramatics, Northeastern State College  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays, which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

### STAGING THE TRAITOR

By NINA J. BAKER  
Director of Dramatics, Elyria, Ohio

(As produced by the Players' Club and Thespian Troupe 946 of Elyria High School, Elyria, Ohio.)

**THE TRAITOR**, a melodrama in two acts, by Herman Wouk. 15 men and 3 women, modern street costumes and Navy uniforms. One interior. Royalty, \$50.00 first performance, \$25.00 each succeeding performance. Samuel French, 25 W. 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

#### Suitability

One could almost wish that this play *wouldn't* remain so persistently timely. Just when it threatens to become somewhat "dated," an Alger Hiss trial or a Klaus Fuchs case fills the news. The words of the latter's father, quoted from my morning paper as I start this article, might be taken directly from *The Traitor*. When the young scientist of the play is being questioned, he exclaims: "What guide has a man for his actions but the lights of his own reasoning and good conscience? . . . I saw a chance to bring world peace and I acted." This morning Dr. Fuch's father tells reporters, "If he did it, it was because of his idealism and regard for Communism." *The Traitor* will be timely as long as the cold war lasts.

#### Plot

Dr. Allen Carr, an earnest, idealistic young scientist, sincerely believes that the only way to prevent the catastrophe of a final world war is to share with the rest of the world, and particularly with Russia, all our knowledge of the atom bomb. He sets about carrying out his ideas secretly and in so doing brings down upon himself the full force of Naval Intelligence. In the scientist's absence, an Intelligence crew descends

upon his study, makes a sweeping examination, taps his telephone, and sets up a dictaphone. This is one of the most exciting scenes of the play.

Through the combined persuasive efforts of kindly old Prof. Emanuel and a wise, tough, disillusioned, but perservering Naval Intelligence Captain, Dr. Carr finally realizes the awful enormity of his acts and lends himself heroically to correcting his mistake. In a gun-battle climax both he and the high-ranking Russian agent are killed. The ending is right and inevitable.

#### Casting

We may as well recognize right in the beginning that this play presents casting problems. Fifteen men and three women! That alone will rule it out for many schools, but it is so well worth doing that any effort to overcome this difficulty will be amply repaid.

The role of the scientist demands a personality that elicits sympathy, and a great sensitivity and versatility in presenting the many facets of a complex and diverse character. He must be able to portray successfully many emotions.

For the old professor line-reading is of paramount importance. He has many long speeches and must use variety and be able to "open up" the long passages so that they will have meaning and effectiveness.

Capt. Gallagher can be all things to the play. He is hard-bitten and humor-

ously ironic — providing most of the laughs of the play; but when he goes into action, everything snaps into high gear.

Lieut. Henderson, nice-looking, fresh, likable, given to banter but ready for serious business at a moment's notice, is not particularly difficult to play but is a rich and rewarding part. Jane, Dr. Carr's fiancée, is attractive, intelligent, and has a certain maturity. Since she is on stage for a considerable time with few lines, she must have repose and yet be a good listener, with a quiet alertness that keeps her in the picture. Eva McKeon, as one of the spy ring, we played fairly straight with only a touch of the siren. Only one member of the spy ring is actually foreign, and he may have any European accent. Just sounding different helps to make him seem sinister and menacing. Other characters are minor. If necessary, the number of seamen in the Naval Intelligence unit can be cut down by one or two and their lines and business distributed among the others.

#### Rehearsals

Six weeks is our usual time for preparing a play, and it was quite adequate for *The Traitor*. This meant two hours every day after school for five weeks, four hours on the last Sunday afternoon for putting the entire play together — with stage set, stage props (hand props had already been in use at least ten days), lighting — in fact, everything except costumes and make-up. On Monday came a similar session; on Tuesday, the first dress rehearsal — after school; and on Wednesday night (our only night session) the final dress rehearsal.

#### Directing

Following are some brief but specific suggestions that may prove helpful in directing this play: (1) If the professor is walking about at the opening, instead of dictating from the sofa, the play starts off better. (2) The search scene at the end of Act One must be planned to the smallest detail, so that it seems that each member of the Intelligence team has



done this before and knows exactly what he is doing now. (3) As the sailors come piling through the windows in Act One, Scene Two, the action in center stage must be very fast and incisive, keeping the attention of the audience there. Otherwise, the window entrance may bring an undesired laugh. (4) Gallagher has some puzzling lines on page 55. When he says to Henderson: "Take an even strain" and through the next two sentences (and for the sentence on the next page, "Somehow we'll have to manage to search this place."), we had him speak in an undertone, so that Jane presumably doesn't hear him. If the two men work well DL just before these lines, it isn't too obvious. (5) The second dictaphone can be installed behind a picture on UR wall. (6) Act Two, Scene Two, can open with a most effective stage picture: Jane on sofa L; Prof. Emanuel and Henderson in chairs DR; Chief Wilson and assistant working on dictaphone UR; Reynolds on guard inside window L; and Gallagher and the other three men grouped DLC. (7) The long speeches of the Russian agent present real problems, especially the one that covers almost two pages. We cut it a bit, but one has the feeling that it was already reduced to a minimum in the original production and that practically everything in there must remain. So the director must help the actor to handle it "as is." Action is the key to this; but in order not to have it seem "put in," the character must be played as an alert, tense individual. Then his moving toward Carr, tapping him on the shoulder, moving away, walking up and down, loosening his coat, sitting on desk, bench or chair, rising and moving about again, etc., will seem natural to him. All this must be fitted skillfully to his lines. (8) To keep Dr. Carr at stage L for the shooting, so he can fall near the sofa, use floor lamp UL for him to turn off remaining light — instead of switch by the archway. (9) The ending in the script is unsatisfactory. We had the professor re-state some of Carr's own lines in his final speech, making the closing line: "Don't blame yourself, Captain. He was torn between two loyalties — loyalty to his country and loyalty to all mankind. He saw a chance to bring world peace. If he made a mistake, he has given his life to correct it." End with tableau; cut telephone business.

#### Stage Problems

At the time we did *The Traitor*, only the cloth-bound edition was available. It had no scene plot and the brief verbal description of the set was not clear, so we had to work ours out the hard way. A rough sketch of the one we used is included here.

Any director will recognize immediately that the problem prop is the Geiger counter, but it really isn't too difficult. Almost any scientific laboratory or supply house can furnish a picture of it, and

#### MISS BAKER

Miss Baker is Director of Dramatics in Elyria High School, a position held since 1928. She is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, and has done graduate study at Northwestern and Columbia Universities.

some houses will loan or rent one. An ingenious lad, with a picture, some light ply-wood, a can of gray paint, a clacker from the dime store, some batteries, wire, and a switch or two, can make one that works on stage and is convincing. (A little flexible tongue of metal under the carrying handle can be pressed by the actor without anyone's noticing, and this, wired to the clacker, produces the sound.)

With all the popping in and out of windows that the Navy does, it's better to use casements, with the sill not much more than two feet above the floor.

An easy spot for the second dictaphone is behind a picture. We took a round piece of tin (off a can), punched holes for screws, and covered it with a piece of black net.

#### Lighting

Only simple light changes are needed. We used a pair of side lights for the apparent source of general illumination, this to be turned on when the characters enter the room at the beginning of Act One, Scene Two; off just before the entrance of the Russian agent; and on again by Gallagher on page 106. A floor lamp UL is turned on by Henderson in Act One, Scene One, to examine the photo negative; and the same lamp is turned off by Carr on "Captain! For God's sake!" on page 106. Stage illumination is dimmed up or down on these changes.

#### Costuming

No special problems are presented here. In a city of any size, there will be plenty of uniforms available from

men and boys who served in the United States Navy. Stripes of gold braid can be added for the necessary rank, and ribbons and medals used as desired.

Prof. Emanuel and Dr. Carr should not be too trim and pressed, and Mr. Fislinger should look very prosperous.

#### Make-up

This is easy — just the usual. Many of the characters are young, requiring only straight make-up. For the older characters, choose students with potential hollows or pudginess that can be emphasized. Add to these pale or ruddy foundations and powder; some lines; gray eyebrows; suitable hair colors, cuts, and coiffures; and omit cheek and lip rouge.

#### Budget

Royalty \$75.00; books \$20.00 (We tore apart several copies to supply the minor characters.); dry cleaning on borrowed costumes — before we returned them, about \$12.00; advertising and programs \$55.00; paint, a small amount of lumber, and a few properties, about \$25.00. Total, \$167.00.

#### Publicity

If only one could rub a magic lamp and have a house full of audience every night! We used the usual posters and window cards around school and about town; got several articles into the local paper; had spot announcements and an interview on the local radio station; and broadcast various skits and announcements to the school over the P.A. system. But after all is said and done, we still have to depend upon our students to "sell" the play. It takes that personal contact.

#### Results

We still experience a warm glow when we think of our production of *The Traitor*. It is a very satisfying play and one not quickly forgotten.

Next Issue: Staging  
KNICKERBOCKER HOLIDAY

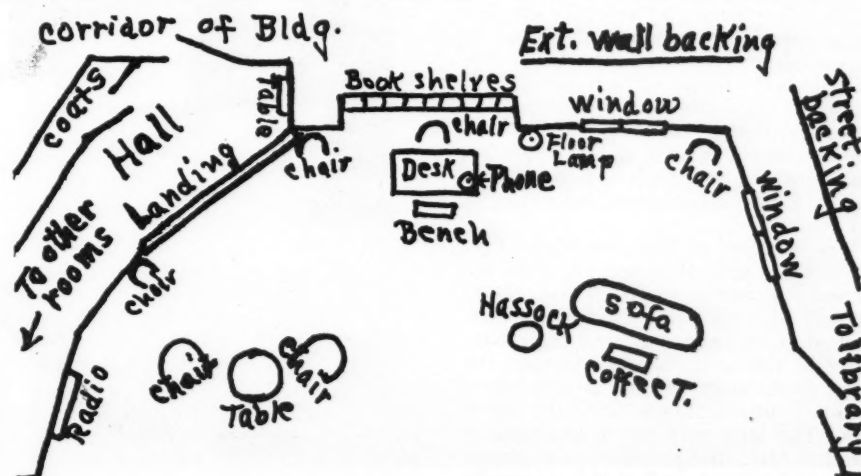


Diagram of Stage Setting for *The Traitor*.

## DRAMA FOR CHILDREN

By LOUISE C. HORTON

1751 Webb #205

Detroit 6, Michigan

This Department has for its purpose the advancement of the Children's Theatre Movement in America. Directors and teachers are urged to report to Miss Horton, for publication in this Department, news of their productions and other significant projects.

The sounder, more intelligent view and use of creative dramatics have received a boost with the publication of Isabel B. Burger's book, *Creative Play Acting*, by A. S. Barnes and Co., New York.

A misunderstanding of this dramatic method has led in the past to its misuse. Experts in the field have worked to raise the standards of this art.

Mrs. Burger's book is a comprehensive course in the art of teaching creative dramatics. It is a complete guide, and no teacher can afford to be without it. That includes all teachers, teachers of every subject, for the author makes it clear that creative dramatics is one of the most effective educational means open to the instructor today.

This book, *Creative Play Acting*, does more than just present a planned program of action, with exercises and suggestions. It explains the psychological advantages of creative dramatics. It demonstrates, through clear example, how it helps develop the whole child. No lecture or reading assignment can bring home to a child any of the basic attitudes necessary for today's citizen with half the effectiveness of personal participation in a creative dramatic demonstration.

There is a worthwhile quote from Chapter One. "What are the basic attributes of a contributive citizen in today's democratic society? Besides a good foundation of factual knowledge, it is physical, emotional and spiritual health that constitutes the goal. The well-rounded boy and girl today should possess: (1) a healthy and well-coordinated body; (2) flexibility and fluency in oral communication of ideas; (3) a deep and sympathetic understanding of his fellow man; (4) an active creative imagination; (5) resourcefulness and independence; (6) initiative; (7) controlled and balanced emotions; (8) ability to cooperate with the group; (9) sound attitudes of behavior toward home, church, school and community; (10) aesthetic sensitivity — a real appreciation for beauty of form, color, sound, line."

Mrs. Burger, in her development of the creative dramatics process, gives examples to prove each of the above points. She takes the reader and student step by step, in clear language, through the activity pantomime, the mood pantomime, change-of-mood pantomime, into dialogue and the short play. The long play too is analyzed in detail. Mrs. Burger does not waste words and is most explicit in her remarks to the director and technician.

The Appendices give a bibliography of stories for dramatization according to age groups; the texts of a short play, *The Queen of Hearts*; a longer short play, *The King's Birthday*; and a long play, *Child of the Sky*.

The illustrations and sketches are well chosen to put their points across.

We turn from Mrs. Burger's book to her actual work in creative dramatics, which she has been conducting successfully for many years in Baltimore, Maryland at the Children's Experimental Theatre.

The theatre has had such success and now has such a long waiting list that this year the Experimental Theatre has decided to set up its first branch in Catonsville, Maryland. The arrangement of setting up separate branches in the outlying communities, conducted by their trained apprentice teachers, will

take care of the many boys and girls whom the main theatre cannot include. The Theatre hopes to establish an additional branch each year.

The Catonsville Branch will be under the direction of Miss Clare Babb, graduate of Wheaton College in Massachusetts and long an associate of Mrs. Burger's.

There will be two groups of 25 each and they will meet once a week after school for an hour and a half. One group is for children 8 to 10 years of age, and the other, for those 11 to 14. The classes will be held at the Catonsville Elementary School and the final play will be presented at Catonsville High School next spring. The group is sponsored by the Woman's Club of Catonsville.

The main theatre in Baltimore, under Mrs. Burger's direction, has an ambitious program for this year. It will give four plays for children (December, January, March and May), a teachers' training course for youth leaders, January through March, and continue to give consultations, lectures and demonstrations for youth-serving agencies in the community. This season, for the second time, the Children's Theatre Association, in cooperation with the Balti-



Young people add finishing touches to their workshop, the *Hundred-Year-Old House*, in preparation for the opening of the Children's Experimental Theatre season, Baltimore, Maryland.



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more Museum of Art, brought the Children's World Theatre to Baltimore with a performance of *Aladdin* presented at the Museum in November.

A scholarship tuition-free course is offered three times a year by The Children's Playhouse, Muncie, Indiana, under the direction of Mrs. Irene Belcher. Seventeen children get free instruction in theatre and drama in three different classes a winter season, reaching over fifty children during that time. Their work is largely at first in creative dramatics. This scholarship idea is one which well might be followed by other theatres to give worthwhile children who cannot afford it the advantage of children's theatre participation.

The work of Charlotte Chorpenning at the Goodman Memorial Theatre in Chicago has long led in the children's theatre field. Mrs. Chorpenning reports this year that their advanced students are beginning to do one children's play as a thesis. This work, of course, is done under supervision. Last spring one student did *King Midas*. This December, their business manager will do *Robinson Crusoe*, by Charlotte Chorpenning. The Goodman Children's Theatre's first production this year will be a revival of *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Inspiring children's theatre work is being conducted at Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan, under the direction of Eleanor Chase. Beginning the week of November 12 the Children's

Theatre of Michigan State College began its touring with Charlotte Chorpenning's *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The actors travel by bus and truck to towns within a hundred mile radius. The performances are sponsored by P.T.A.'s, schools, A.A.U.W., etc. The actors, with the exception of Jack, are adults.

The Children's Theatre is built around the nucleus of the class in children's theatre. The members of that class serve as production heads on all crews. The other crew members are from the

introductory course in theatre. The try-outs are college-wide. Technical Director is Harold Niven.

In addition to this work, their Toyshop Theatre, which uses child casts, will be doing some plays December 1 and 2. Dorothy Harrison, a graduate assistant in children's theatre, will base her master's thesis on the organization and development of this theatre. The plays themselves are directed by other graduate students.

(Continued on page 22)



Pleased Surprise! "The New Puppy" Beginning Pantomime in a Let-Your-Hands-Talk lesson. Children's Playhouse, Muncie, Ind.

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Cincinnati, Ohio

(Continued from page 21)

The Toyshop Theatre is a membership group. Junior members (5 to 9 years) attend the plays (4 each year) and the active members (10 to 14 years) try out for the plays. All the active members who keep coming to try-outs are used in roles during the year.

They also have a couple of creative dramatics classes which are used as demonstration classes for the college course.

The Children's Theatre plans for its spring production *Huckleberry Finn*, by Frank Whiting.

The Play House Children's Theatre, Cleveland, Ohio, opened their new theatre. Their classes now take place in their Brooks Theatre and their 77th Street Theatre. About 500 children are enrolled.

Their first show of the season, presented the end of October and over the Thanksgiving holiday, was *Dick Whittington and His Wonderful Cat*, by Edward Mabley. Harriet Brazier, the director, reports that they also have a new script, written by a blind girl, a student at Western Reserve, and Herbert Kanzell. It is called *The Hiccupping Princess*. Miss Brazier plans it for production at Christmas time.

# Best Thespian Honor Roll

For Meritorious Participation in Dramatic Arts During the 1949-50 School Year.

Columbus Carpenter, Troupe 3, East High School, Fairmont, W. Va.  
Mary Louise Peterson, Troupe 4, Cody, Wyo., High School.  
Ralph Schroeder, Joyce Markell, Troupe 6, Twp. High School, Mentor, Ohio.  
Lynn Phalen, Troupe 7, Johnstown-Monroe High School, Johnstown, Ohio.  
Joan Kintzing, Jack Larison, Troupe 8, Edison High School, Miami, Fla.  
Gerald Lange, Mary Schwitzer, Nancy Barker, Nita Olson, Troupe 12, Sac City, Ia., High School.  
Carol Blick, Gail Conner, Lisbeth Shields, Troupe 13, Castleford, Idaho, High School.  
Barbara Foster, John Boicourt, Troupe 16, Twp. High School, Harrisburg, Ill.  
Barbara Berggren, Bethel Strotman, Troupe 17, Aurora, Nebr., High School.  
Violet Gibson, Troupe 19, Flemington, W. Va., High School.  
Jackie Hauneman, George Bander, Troupe 21, Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, Ind.  
Mary Lee Sloan, Evelyn Justice, Troupe 23, Williamson, W. Va., High School.  
Jim Johns, Troupe 24, Noblesville, Ind., High School.  
Curtis Woods, Troupe 30, Clendenin, W. Va., High School.  
Patty Wells, Troupe 34, Fairview, W. Va., High School.  
Sarah Thigpen, Billy Shaddix, Troupe 35, Mainland High School, Daytona Beach, Fla.  
Betty Porter, Troupe 36, Hope, Ark., High School.  
Darrell Essex, Karen Dobbins, Troupe 37, Centennial High School, Pueblo, Colo.  
K. Dunkley, Betty Westerberg, Troupe 39, Preston, Idaho, High School.  
Patsy Nash, Troupe 42, El Dorado, Ark., High School.  
Peggy Zinn, Sarah Moore, Troupe 43, Hun-Williamson, W. Va., High School.  
Peggy Rowland, Troupe 45, Kilgore, Tex., High School.  
Robertta Oursler, Gary Lehman, Troupe 47, Newton, Kans., High School.  
Margaret Ann Peterson, Troupe 51, Grundy Center, Ia., High School.  
Jacqueline Payne, Bobby Clay, Troupe 53, Heflin, Ala., High School.  
Maxine Jarrell, Sandra Kitchen, Troupe 55, Beaver High School, Bluefield, W. Va.  
Hugh Burgess, Beverly Gallup, Troupe 56, Moscow, Idaho, High School.  
Marvin Atkinson, Ellenor Preith, Troupe 57, Columbus, Ind., High School.  
Richard Hoffmeister, Troupe 60, Sr. High School, Boulder, Colo.  
Laural Hobick, Helen Birge, Troupe 62, Oakwood Twp. High School, Fithian, Ill.  
William Thompson, Troupe 63, East Haven, Conn., High School.  
Emanuel Bourlas, Troupe 66, Lehman High School, Canton, Ohio.  
Ruth Gordon, Kay Baird, Troupe 67, Rigby, Idaho, High School.  
George Flanders, Andrea Adams, Troupe 69, Sr. High School, Dubuque, Iowa.  
Maryann Forbes, Mary Ann Petri, Marlene DeKay, Joan Strange, Troupe 70, Laramie, Wyo., High School.  
Dee Christensen, Troupe 71, Wendell, Idaho, High School.  
Patricia Mann, Troupe 72, Alderson, W. Va., High School.  
Claude Marshall, Charles Woodruff, Troupe 74, Middletown, N. Y., High School.  
Eleanor Fullmore, Troupe 75, Milwaukie, Ore., High School.  
Ladye Bursch, Dorothy Palmer, Troupe 78, Hot Springs, Ark., High School.  
Linda Day, Troupe 79, Millersburg, Pa., High School.  
Ida Frances Routh, Troupe 82, Etowah, Tenn., High School.

Charles Lambert, Troupe 84, Princeton, W. Va., High School.  
Leon Brown, Troupe 85, Mission, Texas, High School.  
James Mecham, Troupe 87, Sterling, Colo., High School.  
Tom La Paze, Troupe 89, Struthers, Ohio, High School.  
James Spahr, Troupe 90, Kingwood, W. Va., High School.  
Barbara LeRoy, Troupe 91, Isaac C. Elston Sr. High School, Michigan City, Ind.  
Lowell Harris, Nancy Zinns, Troupe 94, York Comm. High School, Elmhurst, Ill.  
Arlene Lewis, Troupe 95, Gettysburg, Pa., High School.  
Marilyn Mawson, Troupe 98, Fayetteville, N. Y., High School.  
Lola Boram, Troupe 99, Weston, W. Va., High School.  
Tommy Adair, Troupe 101, Midwest City, Okla., High School.  
David McGinnis, Troupe 104, Springfield High School, Akron, Ohio.  
Jean Weiss, Terry Davis, Troupe 106, Senior High School, Champaign, Ill.  
Carl Balson, Troupe 108, Senior High School, Kenmore, N. Y.  
James Kenworthy, Troupe 109, Liberty, N. Y., High School.  
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Babette Schnee, Walter Carlin, Troupe 114, A. B. Davis High School, Mt. Vernon, N. Y.  
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Marty Slattery, Troupe 118, St. Teresa's Academy, East St. Louis, Ill.  
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William Dickerson, Norma Edworthy, Troupe 121, Stonewall Jackson High School, Charleston, W. Va.  
Tommy Garrett, Richard Thompson, Troupe 122, Newport News, Va., High School.  
Eunice Sheley, Marilyn Hendricks, Troupe 126, Senior High School, Alton, Ill.  
Anne Smith, Dolores Board, Troupe 129, Grapeland, Texas, High School.  
Kay Polhamus, Robert Shep, Dorothy Day, Troupe 130, Army and Navy Academy, Carlsbad, Calif.  
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Arlette Silberbauer, Troupe 132, Senior High School, Oceanside, N. Y.  
Anne Klenzak, Troupe 134, St. Francis Academy, Joliet, Ill.  
Leah Granoff, Joe Watt, Troupe 138, Martin High School, Laredo, Tex.  
Nancy Terwilliger, Troupe 139, Twp. High School, Bradford, Ill.  
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Donna Bissey, Terry Edgeworth, Troupe 142, Bloomington, Ind., High School.  
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Harrison Morgan, Troupe 147, Hillsborough High School, Tampa, Fla.  
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David Carter, Lawrence Bradley, West High School, Denver, Colo.  
Bernard Noble, Betty Jo McClure, Troupe 152, Elkview, W. Va., High School.  
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Kent McKinney, Troupe 331, Masontown, W. Va., High School.  
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Jim Berry, Troupe 338, Adamson High School, Dallas, Texas.  
Donna Jones, Troupe 344, Montezuma County High School, Cortez, Colo.  
Sue Reed, Troupe 342, Dover, Ohio, High School.  
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Margaret Misk, La Vonne Sword, Troupe 352, Senior High School, Robbinsdale, Minn.  
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Jacqueline De Soto, Troupe 1053, Colfax, Wisc., High School.

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**THEATRE ENJOYMENT** by Prof. Talbot Pearson is now available. These series of articles published in **DRA-MATICS** last season will appeal primarily to those who may be designated as "theatre consumers." The sub-titles of the articles are Theatre Background and History, What Makes a Play Great, Playwrights and Their Methods, Stage Designers and Designs, The Director's Place in the Theatre, The Actor on the Stage, Dramatic Criticism and the Men Who Write It. Price: 60¢.

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## What's New Among Books and Plays

The purpose of this department is to keep our readers posted on the latest theatre and drama publications available from publishers. Mention or review of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by DRAMATICS. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only.

### DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, Inc.

14 East 38th St., New York 16, N. Y.

*Mr. Barry's Etchings*, a play in three acts, by Walter Bullock and Daniel Archer. Royalty upon application. 7 m., 6 f. Jud Barry, an idealistic, impractical genius has developed a black rose, a marvelous perfume, and above all some perfect etchings, among which are superb counterfeits of fifty dollar bills, done just for the love of fine craftsmanship. But the greedy exploitations of the village rich have brought hard times to people of good will. In a moment of weakness, Jud donates several hundred thousand counterfeit bills to the hospital, to the Veterans housing, to a reform candidate for mayor. The town is transformed. Then, simultaneously, a pair of underworld counterfeiters and one T-man arrive. At the end of the second act Jud confesses, but at the end of the play we see that Jud might go free on a Presidential pardon, since he can sell himself, his story, his endorsements for so much money that he can redeem all of the counterfeit fifties which he had passed. This is an excellent, absorbing play for high school casts. —Edward L. Walters

*Lady in the Dark*, a musical play in 2 acts, by Moss Hart, with lyrics by Ira Gershwin and music by Kurt Weill. 9 m., 11 w. Royalty, \$50.00. Liza Elliot, successful editor of *ALLURE*, a fashion magazine, finds herself inexplicably on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Although disdainful of psychiatry, she finally seeks its help. Under Dr. Brook's care she is gradually brought to admit and to realize that beneath her severely tailored exterior she longs to be a glamorously beautiful woman — and that behind her executive manner lurks an enchantress. These suppressed desires, with their source in bitter childhood rejections, are brought out from the dark caverns of her subconscious into the light of understanding by fanciful throw backs presented in music and lyrics. By the play's end Liza is freed from these obsessions and finds that love and a career can be combined with the help of her advertising manager, Charles Johnson. With a light touch the case of psychiatry is presented to the accompaniment of Gershwin lyrics, the sophisticated patter of Moss Hart and music by Kurt Weill. *Lady in the Dark* would be an enjoyable experience for adult Thespians and a challenge to any stage designer or director — not suitable for high school groups. —Margaretta Hallock

### IVAN BLOOM HARDIN CO.

3806 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines, Iowa

*On the Road to Bethlehem*, a Christmas play in one act, by Josephine Bacon. 12 m., 3 w., 2 small children; Carol singers. (Can be played with a smaller cast.) Six copies must be purchased. This Christmas story about the birth of the Christchild is unusual in that the setting is as simple as it is modern. A mother reads the Christmas story to her two children on Christmas Eve. As she reads, by use of two spotlights there appear several groups of people who miss seeing the Christ because of carelessness, greed, personal pleasure, snobbishness. The climax occurs with the beautiful picture of the Three Wise Men presenting their gifts to Mary and the Christchild. It is well written, easy to stage, can be as elaborate or as simple as the director chooses. Recommended for

high school assemblies and to churches with their youth organizations. —Leon C. Miller

*Star of the Nativity*, a Christmas play in three scenes, by Josephine Bacon. 7 or more characters. Costumes. Purchase of five copies required. This play is unique as the guardian of the Heavens is seeking a star to make a long and arduous journey across the skies. All kinds of excuses are made until the smallest and weakest star volunteers, thus becoming the immortal, shining Star of Bethlehem. Carol singing, special recitations, etc., can be used. Recommended for elementary schools and church Christmas programs. —Leon C. Miller

### SAMUEL FRENCH, Inc.

25 West 45th St., New York 19, N. Y.

*Quality Street*, a comedy in four acts, by J. M. Barrie, 6 m., 9 w. Royalty, \$35.00. Some maiden ladies live on Quality Street at the time of the Napoleonic wars. They are gentle, lovable, prim; and only one seems to have found a man sufficiently, impossibly gallant. In the first act they await his proposal to Phoebe, the youngest. He does appear, but only to tell the dear ladies that he is going to war. They receive the news with mixed emotions, for after all, he had tramped dirt into their exquisite parlor; also he had given

them bad advice on investment. Ten years later he returns to find the gentle ladies failing at running a school. He seems hardly to recognize Phoebe, who had not aged too well; and in annoyance, she digs out the old family wedding gown, goes to a ball, becomes the belle, then in decorous spite says she is Phoebe's niece. This is all soon cleared up, and the play ends happily for Phoebe and her more kindly maiden sisters. The play should be good for ladies' auxiliaries or high schools in need of a costume play. If done well by amateur groups, the comedy will be cute without revealing the sharp claws of satire buried deep in its pleasant fluff. —Edward L. Walters

*One Act Plays For Stage and Study*. Tenth Series. Price, \$4.00. In this volume are twenty-two contemporary plays by American writers. Of these plays, the most suitable for high school production in respect to theme and characterization are: *Period House*, *The Dreamlost*, *A Playwright's Dilemma*, *The Farrell Case*, *Havana Moon*, *The Honor and the Glory*, *The Nerve of It*, and *He Who Gets Hooked*. Some of the remaining ones could be done by colleges and adult groups. There is a \$5.00 royalty on each play. —Katharine Taylor

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